

'Dagenham Girls'

(Working Title)

01/06/09

BLUE REVISIONS 24/06/09

By

William Ivory

Developed with the assistance of the UK Film Council, Intandem,
Film4 and the Irish Film Board

Number 9 Films (Slate) Ltd
Linton House
24 Wells Street
London, W1T 3PH
Tel: 0207 323 4060

William Ivory
C/o The Agency
24 Pottery Lane
London W11 4LZ
Tel: 020 7727 1346

Keep On Running By The Spencer Davis Group, thunders over titles and-

1 EXT. ESTATE IN DAGENHAM - DAY

1

RITA O'GRADY and her husband EDDIE, both late twenties, step onto the balcony of a flat on a massive housing estate in East London. With them are their two children, GRAHAM and SHARON.

They kiss the kids goodbye as another man, also in blue overalls, emerges from the flats, clammers onto a bike and sets off down the car-less streets. Rita and Eddie grab their own bikes, and ride off into an ever broadening stream of people.

2 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

2

On another part of the estate, a much younger woman, SANDRA, emerges from a flat, waves to her mum on a balcony above and hops onto her bike. She wobbles off, the white patent leather boots she is wearing make balance something of a challenge.

3 INT. ESTATE - DAY

3

Sandra filters in with the great tide of cyclists pouring from the Estate beneath the baking sun. We see them from high above. Sandra spots Eddie and Rita, calls out and speeds up to join them.

4 INT. FORD MAIN PLANT - DAY

4

The tide has become a flood as more and more cyclists freewheel through town and down a hill towards a massive industrial complex with a blue neon sign above it: **FORD MOTORS**.

As they approach the factory, the cyclists diverge, men one way, women the other. Several people stop and kiss at the point of divergence, including Eddie and Rita. Then he pushes off towards the Main Plant, brand new and state of the art while she turns her bike towards a crumbling nineteen twenties monolith the River Plant. We follow Rita, as she cycles between the blackened, paint peeled buildings to a series of bike racks. There, along with Sandra, Eileen, Brenda and Monica, she dismounts and glancing at the hot sun, passes into the factory. MUSIC FADES. CREDITS END. ACROSS THIS-

DAGENHAM. ENGLAND. MAY 1968

5 INT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

5

On the shop floor, a cramped, filthy, windowless place, chatter and laughter rings out. The girls, nearly 200 of them, roll down their overalls and tie the arms off in front of them, revealing bras or camisoles. And as Rita enters and moves to her bench, we drop to floor level and see that nearly all of the women have now removed their shoes. As Rita, threading up her sewing machine, wipes a bead of sweat away from her face, we understand why: the place is an oven! Rita grabs a box of vinyl pieces as Eileen walks past, revealing a ferocious wired bra.

RITA

Bloody hell, Eileen, you got more support
there than the Arsenal-

Eileen makes to retort but is interrupted by a the sound of a hooter. Almost at once there is the noise of a generator engaging and then a staggering cacophony as 200 sewing machines start to clatter away. Talk impossible, the women get down to work.

Rita pulls several pieces from the box beside her and picks up a car headrest frame. She arranges the vinyl around the frame and starts to machine it into place. It is hugely intricate but nevertheless she sews at breathtaking speed and quickly completes the first item. She places it on a trolley behind her and grabs the next frame.

6 EXT. DAGENHAM HIGH STREET - DAY

6

Silence. The street is utterly deserted. And we see how bare, how basic, how unlike the Swinging Sixties, is Dagenham. And then, we see a lone figure, CONNIE, late forties, cycling towards the plant as fast as she can.

7 INT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

7

Rita curses. One of her nails is chipped. She wipes sweat away again and resumes her work at a ferocious speed, finishing another headrest. As she reaches for the next frame, Connie enters, flustered-

CONNIE

Sorry I'm late-

RITA

(smiles; shouts)
Everything alright?

Connie looks across from threading her machine.

CONNIE

Yeah. Just overslept.

Connie takes off her shoes, places a washing up bowl of water on the floor and stands in it. Then she turns to her machine, hassled. But, suddenly, something drops from above with a thud. Connie jumps, startled. It is a dead bird, entangled in cotton threads. Already there's laughter from those who saw the near miss. Connie tenses; staring at the animal on her work bench with a steely expression. She's not in the mood. Instantly, more laughter.

BRENDA

Least it didn't shit on you. They do that sometimes. 'Fore they die.

Connie picks up the bird and marches to the bin with it. Rita looks to the rafters where hundreds of other birds hang dead. She then turns back to Connie, trying not to laugh, as she arrives at her place. But immediately, the hooter sounds again and the power to the machines is switched off. The girls start to make themselves decent-

ALBERT

Ladies...If I could just interrupt you a second-

Rita looks to the far doorway. There, a man in his late fifties, in blue overalls, waits, staring at the floor, in a well practised manoeuvre. This is ALBERT FINCHAM.

RITA

Stand by your beds, men!

**

**

The girls laugh but all around there is also a hubbub of excited chatter as they complete getting dressed. Connie, however, hurries down the aisles and shunts the girls forward.

**

**

**

**

CONNIE

Come on! Hurry up-

**

**

The noise levels have risen considerably.

**

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Get down the front-

**

**

She claps her hands and shouts to the back rows-

**

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Girls-

(turns; shouts)

In you come, Albert-

**

**

**

**

He enters and walks to the front. Connie moves across and stands by Albert's side, facing the girls. He leans into her.

**

**

**

ALBERT

Thank you, Connie-

**

**

Albert climbs onto a bench and the noise rises accordingly. Voices are calling out: "What's happening, then? What they decided?" Albert struggles to speak over the top.

**

**

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Yeah. Alright...Hang on. I'll...If you'd just shut up a minute!

(They quieten)

(MORE)

**

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Right, well...to quote Winston Churchill himself: it ain't the end. It ain't even the beginnin' of the end. But it may well be the end of the beg-

BRENDA

Albert, for fuck's sake, get on with it-

The women laugh. Several call out.

ALBERT

Please! Ladies! I'm doin' me best here-

A shout that he's lovely when he's cross. Albert sags but gradually, the girls are quiet. He nods, relieved.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Thank you...

(clears throat)

So...The deadline we set the management, to respond to our complaint about how they've re-graded you..."un-skilled"...has now passed.

(voices shout; serious this time)

And they still ain't got back to us-
(louder cries)

Which means!...you gotta vote! On the threat we made in that original communiqué: an immediate ban on all overtime and a one day stoppage - to happen on the 29th of May.

(silence. Eileen glances at Rita, nervously)

All them for industrial action: hands up.

Rita's determined face. Her arm goes straight up. She looks round. All of the other hands are up, too.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Against?

(no one)

Thank you. 187 to nil. I'm seein' the management first thing tomorrow mornin'. I'll inform 'em of your decision.

A stunned moment, then as Albert steps down, a huge cheer and applause as and the women break into groups, talking excitedly. Eileen grabs Rita.

EILEEN

We done it!

Rita looks nervous, too.

RITA

First time for everything...

BRENDA

Fuck 'em. That's what I say. Every other bugger round here goes on strike. Why shouldn't we?

RITA

Yeah. Just...maybe don't put it like that if you get interviewed by David Frost, eh?

Everyone laughs and the girls return to their benches, still chattering furiously. In the doorway, Albert watches the women going back to their positions. A young lad, BRIAN, passes by, sweeping the corridor. Albert looks to him, indicating the girls.

ALBERT

I fought Rommel, you know. I was never once scared like I am when I go in there.

The hooter sounds and the machines start up again. Immediately the door slides shut, just as the girls begin to disrobe.

8

INT. DAGENHAM DOCK CLUB - EVENING

8

The sports and social club has been decorated with streamers and balloons. **Young Girl** by Gary Puckett plays on a large portable record player, perched on the stage at one end of the room. However, the dark suits and knee length skirts of the packed dance floor bring to mind the nineteen fifties, not the sixties.

The joint *is* jumping, nevertheless. And standing at a corner table, Rita throws down a large gin before rushing back to Eddie, caught in the thick of the dancing. Close to him is Connie, with GEORGE, her husband, a couple of years younger, angular and handsome, moving stiffly. Also nearby are Eileen and Dave. Eddie spins Rita rather too vigorously and she nearly goes over, laughing, as he grabs her again. Then, suddenly, the music stops and everyone is plunged into near darkness. Moans and complaints from the floor as a Dave runs towards the record player.

DAVE

Alright! Hold your horses-

EILEEN

(to Dave)

This happens every time-

More shouts of derision.

CONNIE

He puts the wrong fuse in. I keep tellin' him-

Then suddenly a piano sounds out. Heads spin towards the back of the room where the older folk are gathered.

RITA

Oh, God! Give him half a chance and he's in there-

Albert is playing "MY OLD MAN." The oldsters immediately start singing along, to groans from the youngsters.

RITA (CONT'D)
-Bleedin' Liberace-

But then, the power is back on and Rita puts the record player on again, drowning out Albert. It's Sandie Shaw's, **Always Something There To Remind Me**. A big cheer. Rita and the others start dancing. She looks across to a peeved Albert and winks at him. He's not amused. Eddie leans in-

EDDIE
Here, where's Brenda gone?

Rita looks uneasy. She shrugs. Eddie nods and whisks her off again.

9 INT. CAR - EVENING

9

A man grunts and thrusts. He's having sex, eyes shut, across the back seat of his motor. Beneath him, Brenda stares at a tear along the seam of the front passenger seat. The man opens his eyes and finally stops thrusting. At last Brenda looks at him.

BRENDA
Your trim. That'll be hangin' right off
in a day or two, that will...
(points to tear on seam)
And I bet I know the girl what sowed it,
n'all.
(nods, smugly. He is stunned)
Go on, then. Chop chop. Or we'll miss the
buffet.

He hesitates, then goes for it anyway. Brenda, head rocking, looks back to the edge of the seat: typical.

10 INT. DAGENHAM DOCK CLUB - EVENING

10

Empty glasses are placed on a tray.

RITA
Right! Who wants another? George? You're finished-

GEORGE
Naah. Be up all night-

CONNIE
Go on! Let your hair down.

He relents. Connie pushes her own across.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Same again for me, ta!

Rita smiles, just as a figure lurches into her.

SANDRA
Who's next, then?

Sandra, in a much shorter skirt than the others, also with a bee hive hair-do, wears a sash which says 21 TODAY and sways alarmingly.

EDDIE
You sure you don't wanna sit down five minutes, Sandra?

SANDRA
You're jokin'...

CONNIE
What about some food...?
(to Eileen)
She won't eat nothin'...
(to Sandra)
There's Scotch eggs-

SANDRA
(to Rita)
I'll have a snowball...Come on, George.
You ain't tripped the whatsit with me yet, have you?

She weaves back onto the floor and is soon involved in something very sixties and very unstable. Rita watches her, then looks back to George uneasily. He starts to move, but it's an effort-

ALBERT (V.O.)
Do you mind, George...If I have this one...?

They turn; Albert is staring across at Sandra; he bends to one side, limbering up. Rita smiles at Albert's gesture. He turns to Connie.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Like to keep me hand in...Jitterbug,
Twist. All them...

He takes a deep breath and prepares to stride out-

RITA
Yeah, well, don't overdo it...
(Albert turns to her)
Give yourself an heart attack...We need you tomorrow-

Albert tuts, piqued. Then he strides out onto the floor. Rita smiles.

11 EXT. DOCK CLUB - NIGHT

11

Sandra sways. Then Dave and Eileen take her by either arm and set off, to escort her home. Finally, Rita and Eddie are left alone in the still night air. Rita takes a deep, contented breath. Then she kisses Eddie on the mouth.

EDDIE
What was that for?

RITA
Nothin'. Like you. That's all...

He is staring at her in wonder. And lust. He tries to grab her.

EDDIE
Come here-

RITA
Oy-

She skips away, laughing.

EDDIE
Ri-ta!

She turns and looks back at him.

RITA
Not out in the street-

She grins and runs off. He chases after her. She easily keeps her distance.

EDDIE
Oh, you're better than that, are you!

RITA
Yes, I am, actually.

Then she goes over on one of her high heels. They laugh together.

12 INT. RITA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

12

A big screaming guitar solo from Cream's **Crossroads**- And Rita re-tunes the radio, exhaling heavily. She feels dreadful.

She settles on **Born Free** by Matt Monroe, then takes a drag on a fag, finishes ironing a shirt and moves across to a cooker where she removes a pan of beans from the heat. She spoons them onto three plates, eggs and bacon already in place, then pauses again, feeling sick. Rita places the plates on the table. In front of Sharon, her daughter (8) who is reading a comic. Graham, their eleven year old son enters, still in his pyjamas.

RITA
Graham...You're gonna be late-

GRAHAM
I don't feel very well...

Rita frowns, crosses and feels Graham's forehead.

RITA
You're not hot.

GRAHAM
It's me stomach.

It's said very quickly. Then he tucks into his breakfast. Rita watches and frowns. Graham eats with the fork in his left hand, his right, clenched. She takes it. He resists but Rita fixes him with her gaze and he unclenches his fist as she turns it over. His palm has angry red wields across it. Rita is shocked.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
I never done nothin'-
(she looks him right in the
eye)
Honest.

She stares. Nods. It's enough.

RITA
Mr Clarke again?

He looks uncertain.

GRAHAM
Yeah.

Rita holds her temper. Just.

RITA
Have your breakfast and go and get dressed-
(he makes to speak)
I'll deal with it...It'll be fine.

She says it with utter conviction. He nods, relieved.

13

INT. RITA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

13

Rita pulls back the sheets on their bed.

RITA

Oy! Lover boy!

Eddie lies face down on the bed. He wears nylon pyjama bottoms. He moans.

EDDIE

Clear off. I'm dyin'.

RITA

We're all dyin'. And we all gotta go to work...Clean shirt-

She drapes it over him. And walks to the door. She looks back. He hasn't moved. She crosses, removes the shirt and tips a bedside glass of water over his back. He yelps, leaps up and she walks out.

14

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

14

As clouds gather, the men (and only men) go about their business outside. GORDON, late twenties, drives a motorised trolley cart, full of completed seats. They load brand new, shining Ford cars onto transporters. But then, a crack of thunder and it starts to rain-

15

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

15

The thunder of the factory. The women work in silence. Sweat drips from Rita's face and she wipes her brow with her sleeve. She's moving with her usual speed, but with something else, too; aggression, as she yanks hard at the cotton threads she must cut off from around the headrests. Then there is a moan. She turns. Connie has stopped work and glugs from a bottle of Lucozade.

CONNIE

Never again, I swear.

Beside Connie, Eileen re-applies a cold flannel to the back of her neck and Brenda downs a pint of milk. But suddenly, spots of water are dripping through the roof.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Oh-

She looks up and grabs an umbrella which she wedges above her station.

BRENDA

Alley-bloody-lujah-

Brenda and several other girls step right under the rain, to cool down. Eileen turns to Connie.

EILEEN

You'll go mad, takin' that up and down...It's showers all day!

CONNIE

I don't care...It's dangerous. Water and electrics...Innit?

BRENDA

What you talkin' about? You're standin' in a bowl of the bloody stuff!

Rita smiles, then sees Sandra who is ashen white, hurriedly place a headrest on the "DONE" trolley, just as it's pushed away. Rita frowns and grabs the item as the trolley is wheeled behind her. She inspects it.

RITA

Con!....Connie!

(Connie turns)

Sandra's at it again-

(indicates a tear)

You're gonna have to say somethin' -

Sandra, who blows bubble gum, sees Rita looking and waves. Rita shouts.

RITA (CONT'D)

Don't wave you silly cow, I'm moanin' about you...

Rita removes her own item, in order to repair Sandra's work. Then she looks back to Connie.

RITA (CONT'D)

We can't keep coverin' for her.

(Connie looks worried)

They're gonna find out, Con. And then they'll give her the boot.

CONNIE

I'll have a word.

ALBERT (O.S.)

Connie...Con! -

She turns. Albert, wearing a suit and union badge, stands directly in front of them, beaming.

CONNIE

Albert.

Then, her eyes indicate the slip she is wearing. And all of the other half dressed girls, too.

ALBERT

Oh, Christ!

He looks down, averting his gaze. Rita, grinning, calls out.

RITA

Maaaaaaaa-n!

The hooter sounds and power is turned off to the benches as the girls dress. But noise remains; excited chatter filling the air. When Albert looks up the whole shop floor has shoved around Connie's bench.

CONNIE

You were sayin'?

ALBERT

(instant smile again)

Meeting tomorrow. Ford headquarters. Down at Warley!

The girls all glance at one another, stunned.

CONNIE

You're jokin' -

ALBERT

(posh voice)

"The machinists? The machinists are threatening strike action..." They couldn't believe it!

(Chatter breaks out on the floor. Albert leans in)

Right. They'll have Hopkins there. Jones. And Grant...He's a right miserable sod. Which means we need one more.

(Eileen frowns)

Little principle I learnt in the war, Eileen: success in battle is very simple. Turn up with more on your side than they've got on theirs and turn up when they're least expectin' it.

(back to Connie)

In this case we're booked in for two thirty, so we'll get there at half one...Monty Taylor'll come from Union head office, I make two, you're three, so-

(smiles; looks round)

-who's gonna be the extra man? Any takers?

And instantly all noise has stopped. The girls stare back at Albert uncertainly. He tutts, disappointed. He looks to Brenda.

BRENDA

Fuck off!

ALBERT

Oh, come on...It's a day off-

All hands go up in the air. Several people call out, too. Albert looks over the rows of faces, just as stymied as before. But then he notices Rita. Their gazes lock again. And he smiles.

16

EXT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

16

Rita wipes down her bench and tosses the off cuttings and threads in a bin. The women are done for the day. She hurries towards the exit. But her way is suddenly blocked, as a forklift truck tows in a massive trailer load of dismantled, un-upholstered seats.

CONNIE

What you doin' with them?

GORDON

This new Escort. Looks like they finally designed something people like.

The driver jumps down, unhooking the load.

BRENDA

Well they can get fucked! We've had our vote! We ain't doin' no overtime!

**

GORDON

Yeah, you took the plunge at last...

He doesn't re-connect the trailer but climbs on board the forklift, anyway, scoffing:

GORDON (CONT'D)

Me and the boys was sayin': we'd've gone on strike years ago; just havin' to turn up in a pig hole like this! You know it's rainin' in here, don't you?

And he drives off. The women stare at the seats, suddenly aware of what they are doing. Rita, frustrated by the delay, leans in to Connie.

RITA

I'll see you tomorrow-

CONNIE

Rita-

RITA (O.S.)

I gotta go!

And she has. Connie hesitates. Then she looks to the girls and walks out. They follow her. Soon all that remains are the seats, un-touched.

17 INT. WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM- DAY

17

Rita is down to her underwear, already in high heels. She slides a pencil skirt on, toppling against the cubicle wall-

RITA

Christ-

Then she grabs a top-

Then she pulls on a top, runs in front of a mirror, checks her teeth and is off-

18 EXT. STREET - DAY

18

It's stopped raining as Rita slides through a puddle on her bike and stops. She jumps off and leans it against a brick wall. She straightens her blouse and immediately curses: one stocking is smeared with splashed up dirt. She considers her options, then, glancing round, removes it. Then the other one. Then she hurries round a corner and approaches the Thomas A Becket Grammar School. It is much leafier here and cars can be seen for the very first time, most parked near the waiting mothers, gathered at the gate. As Rita strides towards them, short skirted, shapely legged, several women turn to look at her. Rita stiffens slightly. A bell rings and the school starts to let out.

19 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

19

A teacher, fifties, cleans a blackboard as Rita enters the classroom.

RITA

Mr Clarke?

(he turns)

I wondered if I could have a word?

He considers her.

TEACHER

Of course-

He motions to a chair. Rita hesitates; it's a pupil's and rather small. She sits anyway. He smiles.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
How may I help you?

His tone is clipped, Empire. Rita stares at the man. There is no easy way. Finally-

RITA
You hit my son.

He frowns, confused. But Rita, hearing it said, feels stronger. And more angry.

RITA (CONT'D)
On his hand. You caned him. And it ain't the first time.

TEACHER
Ah. Yes. O'Grady...I remember.

He smiles; not the slightest hint of remorse. Rita is wrong footed. He crosses the room-

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Forgot his protractor. And it isn't the first time...

He nonchalantly collects some books. Rita flares-

RITA
I don't care whether it's the tenth time!
I don't want you doin' it!

She stops; knows she's lost her temper but she holds his gaze, nonetheless. He simply smiles, calmly.

TEACHER
Have you spoken to your husband about this, Mrs O'Grady?

RITA
(surprised)
What?...No...I-

TEACHER
I do find where matters of discipline are concerned, that's usually the best route-

RITA
He's my son!

Again she flinches inwardly. But again he seems calm.

TEACHER
You live on the estate don't you?

Rita is confused but also on guard now-

RITA
I don't see what-

TEACHER
We find that those boys who come to us from the estate often have difficulty in adjusting to the standards of behaviour required in a school like this...It's not really their fault. Their parents have invariably never undergone the full rigours of academic life-

He looks at her quizzically. And now Rita struggles to hold his gaze. The teacher continues, pleased.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
So the boys can hardly look to them for guidance...

Rita tries to keep her expression neutral.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
But they do adapt...In time...And I'm sure your son will, too. If he's just given the chance.

He smiles, comes across and holds out his hand to shake. Rita stares at it, utterly shocked.

20 INT. SCHOOL - DAY

20

Rita walks blindly away from the classroom, turns down a corridor and stops. Ahead is a dead end. She quickly retraces her steps, passing back round the corner. Another woman, LISA, waits outside the classroom now. She turns to face Rita. She is of a similar age, thin, and impeccably dressed in expensive high street fashion. She frowns, sensing Rita's distress.

LISA
Are you alright?

She speaks with a posh voice. Rita trembles.

RITA
Fuck off!

Then Rita barges past her.

21 EXT. HIGH STREET/NEW KIOSK- DAY

21 **

Rita is shaking, upset and angry. She fumbles in her bag but her packet of fags is empty.

She walks towards a News Kiosk and steps to the front of
a small queue. **
**

RITA
Ten John Player, please.
(hands across money)
Ta.

**
**
**
**
**

She looks down. A few magazines are laid out on top of a
tressel table. One of them is Vogue. It's cover shows
Jean Shrimpton with short, slicked down hair and panda
eyes: the sixties of popular memory. The byline reads:
ALL CHANGE. Rita picks it up. **
**
**
**
**

RITA (CONT'D)
And this, thank you.

**
**

She stands tall as she passes it over. **

22 OMITTED 22

23 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 23

TV pictures of The Prague Spring. A Czech student drops a flower down the barrel of a soldier's gun.

ANNOUNCER
Russia said it was monitoring the situation closely-

Audio fades.

RITA (O.S.)
Tea's ready...

Sharon looks round from the telly. Rita stands by the door, a tea towel in her hands. Eddie is dozing on the sofa and starts to rouse himself. Graham is at a table by the wall where he is doing his homework. He turns and Rita smiles at him.

RITA (CONT'D)
Alright? Need any help?

GRAHAM
Naah. It's easy.

He packs his stuff up. Rita looks at him guiltily. But then he turns suddenly and sees her staring.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
What's up?

RITA
Nothin'...You're a good lad. That's all.

She ducks away from his gaze and moves to the TV. We see that it is now showing an episode of The Magic Roundabout; Sharon has turned over. But Rita switches off.

SHARON

Aw, mum-

Rita steps back into the kitchen. Eddie picks Sharon up as he passes her. She giggles.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Here, Dad, Martine Clarke's got colour. I seen it-

24

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

24

They start to sit round the table.

EDDIE

Yeah, well, we'll have colour soon. Once you can rent 'em-

Rita looks to Eddie who takes up his knife and fork.

RITA

Eddie...We can't go talkin' about colour. We ain't paid for the fridge yet. And the three piece is still on tick.

(he frowns; so?)

And now we got all this unrest at work.

EDDIE

(realising; laughing)

That! You had a vote, Rita. Unrest's when you actually come out and strike!

Rita's face falls and Eddie looks immediately guilty.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Hey, come on! Don't look like that. I'm only jokin'...I'm proud of you. We all are...Stickin' to your guns...We had a book goin' on the shop floor: no one thought you'd even take the vote. So-

(nods positively)

Well done!

Sharon smiles at her mother, too. Rita looks from her, back to Eddie. She isn't sure quite how to take the comment and finally she shrugs.

RITA

Well...It ain't just a vote now. We got a meetin' tomorrow. With all the bosses...And I'm goin'.

Her family stare back, stunned. She avoids eye contact.

RITA (CONT'D)

So...I'll plate your tea up, in the mornin'. Then if I'm a bit late back, you'll just need to heat it through.

Eddie nods relieved. And Rita feels suddenly piqued.

RITA (CONT'D)

Apparently we go to a Berni Inn. On our way there.

She takes a mouthful of her own food, still looking at Eddie, a twinkle in her eyes.

24A EXT. BERNI INN - DAY

24A **

We see Connie, Rita, Albert and Monty enter the Berni Inn.

**
**

25 INT. BERNI INN - DAY

25

Red velour and a deep blue carpet. And in a far corner of the restaurant, Rita and Connie, facing Albert and Monty around a table. The two men wear dark suits, Rita and Connie smart dresses; both have their hair set. Monty reaches across and pours more Blue Nun into a wine glass beside his empty pint pot. Then he carries on talking to Albert in hushed tones. Rita finishes a slice of Black Forest gateaux and moans with delight.

CONNIE

It's alright, innit?

RITA

And that steak...

CONNIE

(whispering)

It's Monty, insists we come here, you know...Long as the union's payin'...

Rita smiles. Just as Monty leans across.

MONTY

Here, Rita...Word of advice-

He stops; uses the corner of the menu to poke between his teeth. Rita stares.

MONTY (CONT'D)

-when we get there. Don't be lured in. If they seem to be askin' you a question, just look at your notebook and I'll have it. Above all, if I nod, you nod.

Albert stares at Rita. She nods. But he keeps his eye on her. However, Monty waves to a waiter-

ALBERT
Monty?

MONTY
What? Thought we'd have one o' them liqueur coffees. Panatella maybe-

ALBERT
Yeah. We could...It's just...If we don't go now, we'll end up bein' on time.

Monty considers Albert. The waiter arrives.

MONTY
Yeah. Just the bill please.

Albert glances at Rita.

26 INT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, WARLEY - DAY

26

A young secretary rushes about her office.

SECRETARY
I...I'm sorry...We weren't expecting you until-

She checks her appointments book. Albert and the others are crowded around her desk, just inside the office.

ALBERT
That's quite alright.

SECRETARY
I'm not sure Mr Hopkins-

ALBERT
Honestly. It's not a problem. Just let him know, we're here, anyway...At half past. As arranged.

(She looks confused, then hurries to an inner door)
And there's four of us. If you need an extra chair.

Rita smiles slightly, looking to Albert; sly old dog.

27 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

27

Now Rita exhales, frustrated. She sits in a dark, hot room with no windows. It is silent.

PETER HOPKINS Ford's Head of Industrial Relations, late thirties, sits beside two other men, GRANT and JONES both middle aged, facing Monty, Albert, Rita and Connie. Rita glances at the clock. Four fifteen. A black suited PENTHOUSE STEWARDESS serves tea and coffee, no one says thank you except Rita. Finally-

GRANT

On a previous occasion, in a free vote, the girls agreed to the new grading structure-

ALBERT

They did not agree, however, as to where they would end up on it. Which is why we're sittin' round this table!

Silence again. Rita fidgets.

HOPKINS

Look. I understand what the girls are saying. I just don't think that *they* appreciate-

MONTY

I'd rather you didn't speak for the girls, Mr Hopkins...None of us here knows what's in their heads.

That comment makes Rita look across. She turns to Connie. Her eyes are firmly on her note pad still.

HOPKINS

The fact remains, there is a formal grievance procedure already in place. And the machinists' case will be heard. What we can't do, is let them jump the queue-

(Rita frowns)

-or every other Ford employee who is waiting on a decision, will want our blood!

MONTY

Peter. Look...You know me. I ain't got no axe to grind with Ford. Am I right or am I right?

HOPKINS

You've always been very fair.

MONTY

Exactly...And we're all men of the world so-

Rita looks to Albert. This is getting too much.

MONTY (CONT'D)
 -let's cut to the chase, shall we? We'll agree to re-convene in two weeks time-

Albert stiffens. Rita looks appalled.

ALBERT
 Monty? -

MONTY
 Wait. Listen...We'll re-convene...and we'll come back down here again for the day...And at that point, you'll guarantee to look into the girls' complaint.

ALBERT
 The thing is, Monty -

MONTY
 That way...you can go back to your bosses and say the strike's off, 'cause of how you handled today's negotiations...and we can go back to the girls and say they're now your number one priority...In a few weeks time.

Hopkins glances at the other Ford men; counts to three.

HOPKINS
 That seems very fair.

ALBERT
 Yeah, well, I'm not sure the girls -

MONTY
 The girls'll be fine! So long as they know they're not just gettin' fobbed off by the management: the unions's settin' the terms. That's what matters -

RITA (O.S.)
 Bollocks!

All heads turn. And Rita blinks. But it's said. And she means it, she realises. She turns -

RITA (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry Albert but...It is.
 Bollocks...Three hours, we've been sittin' here now and -
 (to Monty)
 "That's what matters to the girls?"
 How're you qualified to talk about what matters? To us?...
 (MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)
 (looks to Connie who stares
 back amazed)
 What matters is this-

She reaches into her bag and throws a pile of vinyl cuttings, of the kind we saw her machine at the start, in front of Hopkins.

RITA (CONT'D)
 There. You put them together-
 (spreads them out)
 13 different bits. That makes up an head rest cover...

GRANT
 Ford property, I believe-

RITA
 Oh, get stuffed-
 (to Hopkins; on track)
 What matters is that we have to take them 13 different bits of material and imagine how they fit together...cause there ain't no template...and then we have to sew 'em, all free hand, into the finished article! Same with seat covers and door trim. And that is not unskilled work. Which is how you've re-graded us! Christ, you have to take an exam to get on our line-

HOPKINS
 Please, Miss-

RITA
 Mrs!...O'Grady.

HOPKINS
 Mrs O'Grady, I understand your grievance. But-

RITA
 Oh, no! No, no, no, no...Don't start with all that again; all that I appreciate, I sympathise...It ain't difficult: we're entitled to semi-skilled. And the wages what go with it-
 (Hopkins makes to speak)
 And!...as regards queue jumpin', we put this complaint in months ago-
 (Albert is impressed)
 -and you done nothin' about it. And we both know why you done nothin' n'all, don't we? 'Cause we're women and the women have never gone on strike. This is the first time we've even suggested it.
 (MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

Which meant you thought you could keep
ignorin' us...Well, hard bleedin' cheese,
mate, 'cause it's too late now!

**

Albert's face. And Connie's.

RITA (CONT'D)

We're gonna do what we said we would. No
more overtime and **an immediate twenty
four hour stoppage**. And where it goes
from here, that's up to you. Cause we
only open our gobs when we mean it!

**

**

**

Rita stands. A moment. The others stand too, dazed. The
meeting is clearly over.

28

EXT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, WARLEY - AFTERNOON

28

Rita drags on a cigarette by Albert's car, an old Ford Corsair. She looks worried. Connie is with her. She looks nervous too. The reason is about twenty yards away, by a phone box: Albert being railed at by Monty. After a moment Monty storms into the box and dials. Albert walks back.

ALBERT

He's calling Branch. Tellin' 'em what you
said.

RITA

(nods)
He seems a bit...

She shrugs, awkwardly. They all look back to the phone box. Monty rants. Then Albert fixes Rita with a stare and points a spindly finger. And he grins.

ALBERT

I knew....I knew. Up there-
(taps head. She frowns)
I wanted clever, Rita. That's why I
picked you.
(she is stunned)
Bringin' them cuttin's in, though...that
was magnificent...I didn't expect that:
you'd come prepared-

RITA

Oh, no. No. Grant was right. I was
nickin' them...Eddie uses 'em to patch up
his tent. For when we go campin'...

She nods at Albert apologetically. He stares.

ALBERT
Yeah. Well...All the same...

And he walks off with as much dignity as he can muster.
At the car, he turns. He looks Rita in the eye.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Leave Monty to me.

Rita is wrong footed by Albert's rapid re-focusing.
Connie steps forward-

CONNIE
And what about the factory? The girls.
What you gonna say to them?

ALBERT
I'm not gonna say anythin', Con. You're
in charge on the shop floor. They're your
business. **

He smiles and ducks down into his car. Connie turns to Rita.

CONNIE
You can speak to 'em. It's your bloody
fault.

She crosses to the car, too. And we see she is hiding a
smile, too. She clammers into the car. On Rita. Worried.

29 INT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON

29

The girls are all hard at work when the hooter sounds.
Brenda and Eileen start to make themselves decent but
then stop when they see who it is: Rita, standing on a
bench, looking out over them. Connie is beside her, at
ground level. A beat. Rita hesitates, glances to Connie,
then looks back again. She shouts:

RITA
Everybody out!

A huge roar and the women push to the exit.

30 EXT. WESTMINSTER - DAY

30

Big Ben booms out and a new day dawns.

31 INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

31

Another pair of bare feet, the stockinged soles of which
scratch an itch beneath a large desk. Then, we see a sign
on the desk: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND
PRODUCTIVITY and behind it, the petite figure of a woman
with flame red hair, pouring over a huge pile of manilla
files.

BARBARA CASTLE

Now, I realise this *is* my first day in the job...And it may be that I'm missing something here-

She speaks in a thick Lancashire accent which has poshed up over the years.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

But the facts themselves seem very clear. And they are, that in the last year alone, in the United Kingdom, there were 26,000 strikes. With 5 million working days lost as a result. The affect of this on the country's productivity and balance of payments has been nothing short of catastrophic and yet...the management and the unions seem completely unable to alter this picture...Now why is that exactly?

She looks up. And is confronted by two people: her private secretaries. They are men. And they stare back at her blankly.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

Don't all shout at once...gentlemen.

32

INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

32

The front room of a small terrace; simpler and less plush than Rita's home. George sits in an armchair by the fire. He looks pale. The newspaper is folded on his lap. He blinks, a pronounced tic. And then Connie hurries in from the kitchen.

CONNIE

Here you go-

She carries a fizzy glass of something. She holds it out to him.

**
**

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Down in one-

He takes it. But then he doesn't drink it. He places it on a small table beside him and sits back, picking up the paper as if she isn't there.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

You gotta drink it, George...

He looks at her. Surprised. Zones in again.

GEORGE

Yeah. Sorry...

He downs it; winces.

CONNIE
It's the latest stuff, that.
It's...He...reckons you'll really notice
a difference.

They stare at each other. He manages a smile. Then-

GEORGE
You gotta go, have you?

She holds his gaze and forces a beaming smile.

CONNIE
It's important.
(grabs her jacket)
You know where I'll be...
(turns)
Just don't you be late.

She smiles, determined. He nods, unconvincingly. Then
she's off. George watches the closed door.

**
**
**
**
**
**
**
**
**

**

33

EXT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

33

A great mob of the striking women are gathered by the locked River Plant gates. Several of them wave placards and banners, excited, calling out to the many men who are cycling into the main plant-

BLOKE

Up the strikers...Specially you Brenda-

BRENDA

(flicking vees)

You wish!

BLOKE TWO

Gaaaaarn...give 'em what for-

Rita smiles at Eddie who grins and winks as he sails by on his bike.

DAVE

Get stuck in, girls!

Eileen spots Dave as he cycles in. She waves proudly. Sandra, jiggling a banner, shouts out-

SANDRA

We want respect!

Rita and Brenda turn to Sandra. She wears tight slacks, a tight blouse and is heavily made up.

BRENDA

What you done to your eyes?

SANDRA

They're amazin', aren't they? Me best friend showed me how.

EILEEN

This is a demonstration, you know, Sandra-

SANDRA

And I'm demonstratin'...
(conspiratorially)

There's scouts everywhere! That's how Twiggy got discovered. Just walkin' down the street-

BRENDA

Up West, you dozy sod. Not Dagenham-

Another whistle of support. Connie leans in to Rita.

CONNIE

I can't believe we done this...

RITA

Least they know we're serious now. And we ain't quite as helpless as everyone seems to think we are.

Rita looks proudly across at the girls-

34

INT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON

34

Hopkins is uneasy. He walks through the empty River Plant and looks at all the idle machines.

35

EXT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, MICHIGAN - MORNING

35

The sun beats down on one of the Great Lakes. Then we see a gleaming building, sitting in a wide, open, vista. In front of the building, glinting in the brightness is a sign: FORD MOTOR COMPANY, USA.

36

INT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, MICHIGAN - MORNING

36

Air conditioning hums. In a light and airy space, a man in his mid forties drops food into a huge aquarium whilst speaking on the 'phone.

TOOLEY

Peter, Bobby here...What can I do for you...?

37

INT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, WARLEY - AFTERNOON

37

Hopkins sits in his cramped and dingy office, an old electric fan dinging on a filing cabinet behind him.

HOPKINS
We've got another dispute, I'm afraid-

38

INT. FORD HEADQUARTERS, MICHIGAN - MORNING

38

TOOLEY
Another one? Who is it this week?

He turns from the tank. That *is* new.

39

EXT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON

39

Baby Come Back by The Equals blasts from a transistor radio around which several of the girls dance. A crate of beer lies on the floor. Deck chairs have now been found, also, and many of the women sit in them, eating ice cream wafers which Eileen dispenses from a large box. A bin wagon passes and the driver slows, leans out-

DRIVER
It's a lot more fun on your picket than ours usually are. I might join you later.

MONICA
It's women only, love.

The girls laugh, the bin waggon pips and accelerates away, swerving past a van which pulls up beside the women. Written on the van's side is: **A.A. Horovitz Greengrocer**. The door opens and Brenda gets out. She has several brown paper bags in her arms.

BRENDA
Tea's up! Bananas, apples, pears!

The girls rush over to help themselves. Then from the van steps Mr Horovitz, about twenty five and VERY good looking. He also looks, however, exhausted. He removes Brenda's bike from the back of the van and places it on the side. Brenda waves to him.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Thanks for the ride, Arthur!

He nods, embarrassed, clammers in and zooms off. The girls are open mouthed.

EILEEN
Brenda!...You never-

BRENDA

Why? He's gorgeous...And just as I was leavin' with the fruit, he goes: "I believe all the workers of the world should unite." And I thought to meself, I can help you with that one straight away, mate.

She bites an apple and sits. Suddenly Connie smiles.

CONNIE

Yeah, well, much as I'd like to hang around, discussin' solidarity for another eight hours...Me date's here-

George crosses the road. He looks immaculate, wearing a suit, his hair neatly Brycleeemed. A couple of whistles as he stops. He smiles. But he still looks slightly hollow eyed.

RITA

Don't you scrub up nice...What's goin' on?

CONNIE

(thrilled)
You made it.

GEORGE

It's our anniversary...

RITA

What?

A chorus of the girls calling out Connie's name, cooing and clapping.

RITA (CONT'D)

Why didn't you say something-

CONNIE

I didn't wanna make a fuss...
(brightening)
So, say "up yours" to the management from me, will you?! We're off.

She leaves to shouts of 'bye' and 'enjoy yourselves'.

BRENDA

Right. Who's for a game of pontoon?—

She produces cards. Just as there is an immense rumble of thunder. Moans from the girls.

EILEEN

I knew it was too good to last—

SANDRA
It'll be fine-

And the rain comes. Squeals from the girls as they rush about and gather up stuff.

MONICA
What we gonna do? Pubs aren't open-
Rita, gathering placards, looks at her watch.

RITA
I dunno...We have done a full day-
SANDRA
And I promised me mum I'd cook tea.

RITA
(grinning)
Sod it! We registered the protest...Hooter's blowin'

The girls cheer. The whole group runs around, packing, shouting hurried goodbyes and dispersing.

BRENDA
Hey and Rita!-
(Rita looks round)
Well done!
(Rita frowns)
Was your gob got us here, wannit?

Brenda leaves. Beat. Rita smiles.

40

INT. CAFE - DAY

40

Albert's POV as he watches Rita struggling with the placards, he bangs on the window to get her attention, she comes over to the doorway of the café.

RITA
Albert-
ALBERT
Just been round your house.

He wipes his face with his hanky. Rita watches him.

RITA
Why?

ALBERT

Cause I thought you'd'a gone home ages
ago...I'm lucky if I can get the lads to
hold out the full hour-

Albert notices the placards and smiles. He then looks to Rita who stares at him expectantly:

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Oh...I wanted a quick chat, was all...
(indicates cafe)
Fancy a cuppa?

RITA
I can't. Sorry...I told Graham I'd meet him from school.

ALBERT
(checks time)
You got twenty minutes 'fore they tip out, ain't you?

She frowns; that's rather insistent. He looks up from his watch, meeting her gaze. He smiles.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
I'm buyin'.

41 INT. CAFE - DAY

41

Rita stares as Albert spoons three sugars into his tea. He stirs and looks at her. She waits, a little edgy. Then he adds one more. She makes to speak-

He stirs again-

RITA
Albert, come on! Cough it up!

He looks her in the eye.

ALBERT
Alright...You won't win.

RITA
What?

ALBERT
This battle...You're gonna lose-

RITA
But...we got a case. You said so. We-

ALBERT
Oh, don't get us wrong. You might get Ford to back down over the gradin' thing but...I'm talkin' big picture. And in that case, you ain't even in the frame-

RITA
 (irritated)
 What do you mean we're not-

ALBERT
 -'Cause this dispute's got nothin' to do
 with what skill level you are! Ford's
 decided to give you less money 'cause
 they can...They're allowed to pay women a
 lower wage than men.

She stares at him.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
 And not just Ford neither. The whole
 country, Rita. Women gettin'
 less...because they're women...

She stares at him. She's already there but daren't say
 it. He shrugs.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
 You'll always come second, you'll always
 be dependent, you'll always be fightin'
 for the scraps from the top table as long
 as-

RITA
 -we ain't got equal pay...

ALBERT
 Oh, Rita, if you knew how thick most of
 the blokes I deal with are...

She stares. It makes sense. But she's scared. She looks
 away. A second. She looks back, a new thought in her head-

RITA
 Why? Why you bothered about us gettin'
 the same as the men?

He stares; knows Rita will accept only the whole truth.
 He smiles fondly.

ALBERT
 I got brought up by me mum...Me and me
 brothers. Me dad cleared off when we were
 nippers, so...
 (nods)
 She worked all her life at Ranley and
 Coopers. Ball bearin's...She paid aunt
 Lilly for lookin' after us durin' the day
 and...

He stares, forcing back the emotion. Then to Rita:

ALBERT (CONT'D)

...it was hard. Especially cause she got paid less than half what the blokes in the factory was gettin'. For doin' the same work...But there was never any question it could be different...Not for her.

(smiles, fondly at Rita)

You remind me of her, actually, Rita...You got heart and...brains and-
(frowns)

-and someone has to stop those exploitin' bastards from gettin' away with what they been doin' for years!

He looks back, his eyes filmed with water.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

And you can. You can. If you make your battle focus on the right target.

Rita stares, suddenly energised. But she's scared, too.

RITA

What about Connie? **She's Shop Steward. We voted for her-**

**
**

ALBERT

And she's magnificent, Rita! At organizin'. And implementin'. But this needs...a leader. To inspire the girls. To make the issues clear. And that ain't her. **Not at the moment-**

**
**
**
**
**

(Rita makes to speak)
And she knows it. 'Cause I've already spoke to her.

**
**
**

(Rita is shocked)
And she's more than happy to let you have a go...More than.

**
**

(touches her arm reassuringly)
Look...Don't say nothin' now. It's a big thing, I know that. Just...sleep on it, will you? And let me know tomorrow...

**
**

(smiles, nods)
Here. I'll take them. Least I can do.

He picks up the placards and goes. Rita watches him.

Rita glances at her watch as she hurries towards the school. A group of the mothers wait. All under umbrellas. Rita hesitates.

LISA (O.S.)

Do you want to wait in here?

She turns. A brand new Ford escort is parked by the kerb, and LISA is poking her head out of the driver's side window. Rita recognises her immediately.

LISA (CONT'D)

We have met. In the corridor outside Mr Clarke's class.

(Rita stares. Lisa shoves open the passenger door)

Please-

Rita glances at the other mothers and suddenly feels a surge of opportunity. With her nose in the air, she hurries over and climbs in.

43

INT. CAR - DAY

43

Rita arranges herself.

RITA

I'm drippin'...

LISA

It's fine. Really...I've been hoping to bump into you for a day or two actually.

(Rita stiffens)

I wondered if you'd care to sign a letter...? To the headmaster. I'm making a formal complaint; about Mr Clarke's use of the cane-

RITA

What?

LISA

He seems to think my son's-

RITA

You mean...You were there for the same reason as me?

LISA

Yes...He was...indiscreet enough to mention why you'd been in...I think he was suggesting something hormonal was happening about the school-

(bitter)

We should all calm down a bit.

RITA

-He just fobbed me off. He...I mean...I'd got it all worked out in me head; what I was gonna say only-

LISA

Oh, you don't talk to Mr Clarke. You listen...

(scoffs)

He's a bully...That's why he beats them all-

Lisa stops. Rita stares at her impassioned face. And relief floods her body.

RITA
You got a pen, then?

Lisa passes across the letter and pen. Rita signs. Hands everything back.

RITA (CONT'D)
-That first time, when I saw you...
(Lisa frowns, confused)
You're bein' polite, not mentionin' it, I know you are, only...I was upset. As I say and...I never use that sort of language normally.

LISA
Don't you? I called Mr Clarke a complete cock...

Rita is stunned; Lisa smiles. Children are now pouring out of the school.

LISA (CONT'D)
Here they are...

Lisa gets out. Rita, too.

44

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

44

Lisa has an umbrella which she erects and then she moves over to Rita who stands beside her, beneath it. Rita glances across and suddenly, emboldened-

RITA
That dress-
(Lisa turns, frowns)
I seen it. In Vogue...It really suits you.

LISA
Thank you...It's Biba.

A second. Lisa looks back to the children. Rita does too. And her chest swells ever so slightly.

45

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

45

Rita places a mug of tea on a bedside table. Eddie is dozing but now he opens one eye. Rita slips back into bed, her red, nylon nightie crackling, and props herself up against the headboard.

EDDIE

Ta, love...
 (frowns)
 What time is it?

RITA

Six-

EDDIE

We got another half an hour-

**

RITA

(distracted)
 Yeah. Sorry. I was awake anyway, so...

She trails off. A beat. He turns on his side.

EDDIE

Well, now you are...Shame to waste an opportunity-

He nibbles her hip. She giggles.

RITA

Eddie!

He pulls himself up her body and kisses her neck. She's not really in the mood, though.

**

EDDIE

What?...What's up?

RITA

Nothin'...I'm...I got stuff on me mind...
 (she turns; dare she?)
 Which...I didn't say nothin' about last night 'cause I wanted to get straight in me own head first-

**

EDDIE

Get what straight?

She looks at him for a long moment.

RITA

I've decided to get a bit more involved.
 In the dispute.

**

EDDIE

What dispute? It's happened...it was
yesterday.

RITA

Yeah, but...it ain't settled yet, is it?

EDDIE

No, I know but...you've made your
gesture. That's all I mean-

RITA

It wasn't a gesture. It was
a...strike...to get somethin'!

EDDIE

Fine...It's not worth rowin' over, is it?

He smiles. Then kisses her shoulder several times.

**

EDDIE (CONT'D)

**

You got my support, Rita. You know that.
Whatever you wanna do.

**

RITA

Good. Thank you...

**

(he kisses her again)
You're not just sayin' that, are you?

EDDIE

(still kissing)

**

Hmmm? -

**

RITA

'Cause you got an ulterior motive!

**

He finally straightens and looks at her.

**

EDDIE

What's that mean?

**

She stares at his honest, open face. She grins.

**

RITA

I'll show you.

**

She kisses him and they slide down the bed.

**

46

EXT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

46 **

Rita places her bike in the rack. She smiles as Brenda
dismounts, too. But then, both stare open mouthed as
Sandra arrives - in a pair of tiny shorts and a blouse
tied just below the bust. Sandra struggles to get her leg
over the bike seat.

**

**

BRENDA

Bloody hell Sandra, I think you've had a
bit've shrinkage in the wash-

SANDRA

They're hot pants. They're Mary Quant's-

BRENDA

Well you should give 'em back to her.
They look fuckin' painful-

RITA

I think they look nice. Long as you can
breathe-

SANDRA

Course, I can...And it's what Brenda
said, innit: it ain't
Knightsbridge...Dagenham. So if you're
gonna get spotted, you have to stand out
that bit more. Well, I am doin'...

She walks off. Brenda watches her, then looks to Rita.

BRENDA

Come on...

She sets off after Sandra but just as suddenly stops and
turns back. **
**

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Wannit great, though? Yesterday. **
**

RITA

(surprised)

Bein' on strike? **
**

BRENDA

Yeah. Chance to be different...Was
lovely. **
**
**

(smiles)

Felt like it all night. **
**

RITA

What did you do? **

BRENDA

Met the veg man, got blind drunk, then
went back to his place. **
**

RITA

(confused)

But- **
**
**

BRENDA

Oh, it was different, Rita...
(winks)
Just ask him. **
**
**
**

She happily wanders in. Rita **scoffs** and follows. **

47

INT. RIVER PLANT, CORRIDOR - DAY

47

Rita, a hint of a smile still on her face, walks towards the factory floor, pulling her overalls around her waist as she goes. **

BUT then she stops. The notice board is directly ahead. On it, MACHINIST rates of pay:

MEN: £19 7s 6d

WOMEN: £13 4s 2d

Rita stares. She looks determined. Then uneasy.

48

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - MORNING

48

Rita walks onto the floor. She stares at Connie's space: still unoccupied. She begins to thread up her machine. Then she grabs some cuttings. And finally Connie rushes in-

CONNIE

I'm here! Just...Christ-

She grabs her bowl and places it on the floor. Then she pulls her overalls down and she stops - as she sees Rita staring at her.

RITA

Connie, listen. I-

CONNIE

(shaking head)

Rita-

RITA

No! I have to say it! For me!

(stares at Connie)

If I was to get involved with Albert, Con, it's only cause...I got a gob on me...You're the heart beat of this place. You always will be.

Connie smiles, fondly. Then:

CONNIE

Rita...Look at me. All at six's and seven's...Again-

(quietly)

I got enough on me plate at the moment, without takin' on the whole of British Industry...

(nods)

You can do it. And you should.

Rita stares at Connie; makes to speak. But the hooter sounds and the machines start up. The women smile and get down to work.

49

INT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

49

Rita finishes an item, then notices Sandra, tongue out, carefully completing a piece. She is pleased. Then the hooter goes and the girls look across, on the point of getting dressed. But it is Brian, so they simply continue. He looks frustrated. Then scared; as he realises he must enter anyway. This he does and at every bench the women jiggle their bits, wolf whistle and generally make life hell for him.

BRENDA

Hello Brian...That a cotton bob you got in your pocket?...Or is it an hard on?

He reaches into a sack he is carrying and shoves a letter straight at Brenda. She frowns but soon all the girls have them. Rita opens her envelope and reads. She looks furious and then catches Connie's eye. A second and Rita marches off.

**

As she arrives at the door, Albert appears, in his Ford overalls, coming for her decision. She marches past him, thunder on her face, glancing once at him as she strides on. He grins.

**

**

**

**

ALBERT

(to himself)

That a yes, then?

**

**

**

And then, he sets off after her.

**

50

INT. CANTEEN - AFTERNOON

50

Monty Taylor, in his suit and Union badge, stares at the letter. Albert is by his side. They are surrounded by the girls.

MONTY

Ignore it.

RITA

Ignore it?

MONTY

Standard issue. Day after a walk out.

RITA

Have you seen the language?

(Eileen and Brenda nod)

"Your flagrant and aggressive disregard for the existing complaints procedure"....Tone of that-

MONTY

They don't mean it.

RITA
So why they sayin' it...?

MONTY
'Cause...that's how we've always done it.
All the other strikes. It's like the
rules-

RITA

Oh, no!
(snatches letter back)
(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

We're not playin' that game...We ain't your men, remember. We're us. And we won't be addressed in this manner.

(Cheer of agreement. Rita stares at the girls)

All those in favour of not only maintainin' but increasin' our current industrial action by goin' to an immediate all out stoppage until an equal pay settlement is reached-

MONTY

What?

Monty has spoken for them all. Mutterings of "equal pay?" are heard everywhere. Rita turns to the girls:

RITA

Well, why not?

(stares at the trusting faces of the girls)

That's what this dispute is really about, innit?!

Rita suddenly points to the lad seen earlier. He sweeps out the canteen now.

RITA (CONT'D)

They've put us on the same rate as Brushin' Brian! The lowest rate in the whole factory...despite the fact that we have got considerable skill.

(A few mumbled "trues")

And there's only one possible reason for that...'Cause we're women, and in the work place women get paid less than men-no matter what skill they got!

(More support. Agreement.

Shouts now.)

Which is why we gotta demand that from now on, there's a level playin' field and rates of pay which reflect the job you do, not whether you've got a dick or not-

(cheers of support)

This strike is about one thing and one thing only: Fairness!

(To Monty; points)

Equal pay or nothin'!

(huge cheer; Rita turns back to the women)

All those in favour?

(every hand goes up)

Everybody out!!!!

Another cheer and Rita walks to the exit, stopping by the door as a wave of the girls passes her and empties the building. Monty looks panicked and glares at Albert. Albert shrugs with a wry smile.

ALBERT
Nothin' to do with me.

The women sweep out.

51 OMITTED 51

52 INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - AFTERNOON 52

Hopkins looks stunned. He stands beside a window held open by a block of wood.

HOPKINS
An all out stoppage?!

Monty fidgets before Hopkins' desk.

MONTY
Also...The specifics of the strike...It's widened out a bit-

53 INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - AFTERNOON 53

Hopkins appears in his doorway. He is ashen. He looks at his secretary, then he mutters to himself:

HOPKINS
Christ...

54 INT. FORD HEADQUARTER'S, MICHIGAN - MORNING 54

Tooley listens on the phone. He is deadpan.

TOOLEY
Shit.

55 INT. UNION OFFICES - EVENING 55

BARTHOLOMEW
Fuckin' Ada!

CLIVE BARTHOLOMEW, sixty, bearded, stares at Monty. Another middle aged man, ROGERS, also glares at him.

BARTHOLOMEW (CONT'D)
 Equal pay! What were you thinkin', Monty?

MONTY
 It wasn't me....It was Albert. He...He
 went behind me back-

ROGERS
 Really-

MONTY
 He's a loose canon. He-
 (grasping at straws)
 I got him with me...You wanna haul
 someone over the coals, he's your man;
 the bloody trouble maker.

A beat. Bartholomew and Rogers exchange a glance. Then
 Bartholomew nods to Monty.

56 INT. UNION OFFICES, ANTE CHAMBER - EVENING 56

Albert, still in Ford overalls, sits on a chair waiting.
 Monty enters. He looks at Albert and sighs theatrically.

MONTY
 I tried to protect you Albert. But you
 are gonna get such a fuckin'
 bollockin'...

Albert considers Monty and nods. He stands.

57 INT. UNION OFFICES - EVENING 57

Albert sits on another chair in the middle of the room.
 Bartholomew paces up and down for a moment. Then-

BARTHOLOMEW
 This is awkward, Albert, you know that,
 don't you? It jeopardises a whole...raft
 of other negotiations the unions already
 at loggerheads with the management over-

ROGERS
 Not to mention protocol. There's ways of
 goin' on strike. Right ways and wrong
 ways-

BARTHOLOMEW
 Look...Comrade...Basically, you
 encouragin' these women...to get all
 militant-

ROGERS

-shifts the resources away from the blokes...who let's be straight, are the ones at the coal face-

BARTHOLOMEW

We ain't unsympathetic! But...as a union...we have to remember who comes first...The Communist Party. And Marx himself said: "Men make their own history." That's men, Albert!

Monty sighs. He did warn Albert. Albert smiles.

ALBERT

Didn't he also say: "progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex"...Or was that a different Marx? Was that Groucho?

Bartholomew makes to respond but Albert stands: *his* turn now.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Equal pay! Across the board! You tellin' me that ain't worth fightin' for? Course it is! And you know it! Only cause've all the in-fightin' and the prejudice and the sixteen other unions down at Ford all lookin' after their own little patch, you ain't even tried, have you? Well, you listen to me. This...Rita...she's got a bigger set of balls than the three of you put together and she ain't scared of layin' 'em on the line neither, so I, for one, am gonna help her and if you are, what you say you are, an organisation pledged to support its members - which everyone of them girls most definitely *is* - then you'll get off your fat, lazy arses and you'll help her, too! Good fuckin' evenin'!

He storms out of the room. Rogers looks to Bartholomew. They're fucked. A beat. They turn on Monty, furious. He cowers. MUSIC STARTS: BORN TO BE WILD - STEPPENWOLF: "Get your motor runnin'..."

A rally in front of the Town Hall before about fifty people. Albert is on the platform with various other officials. A banner reads A FAIR DAYS PAY FOR A FAIR DAYS WORK. Rita is there, too. Albert finishes speaking and Rita nervously steps forward. A long pause. And then Rita sees Connie, Brenda and the girls. She begins-

RITA

(faltering)

I...work at Ford...As a machinist
 and...I'm here to put our point of view.
 About what's goin' on and how, it ain't
 fair. And also, how it's part of
 somethin' bigger...much bigger...which is
 equal pay...

 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **

She continues. A man in a threadbare coat, a camera
 around his neck, takes out a notebook and starts writing.

**

HEADLINE: DAGENHAM GIRL STRIKERS

**

-IS DROPPED ONTO THE TRESSEL TABLE IN THE NEWSAGENT.

AND THEN FURTHER IMAGES FROM THE BURGEONING DISPUTE ARE
 INTER-CUT WITH MORE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES. THEY START SMALL
 BUT GET BIGGER, MOVING UP THE PAGE AS THE STRIKE GROWS.

59 EXT. DAGENHAM HIGH STREET - DAY

59

Rita addresses a crowd of onlookers. Thirty or so girls
 are gathered around her, including Connie and Sandra who
 hold up a banner proclaiming: *SUPPORT THE FORD
 MACHINISTS*. Passing are a group of West Ham fans on the
 way to a match with scarves and rattles. Several stop and
 listen. Rita sounds much smoother.

 **
 **

RITA

'Cause basically, Ford's done what they
 have, awarded us a pay cut, 'cause they
 think no-one'll really notice, because
 we're women. And women's pay has always
 been less than men's...

 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **

MORE HEADLINES: PETTICOAT REBELLION GROWS etc.

**

60 INT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

60

Gordon and Frank arrive at the River Plant's deserted
 warehouse area on the forklift. They swing open two
 massive doors. Inside, the store is packed with thousands
 of finished headrests, seat covers and door trim. Both
 men look at each other ruefully.

61 INT. CANTEEN - DAY

61

Rita addresses a mass of workers. She is noticeably more
 confident and slicker.

**

RITA

And that's a tactic, not just the Ford
management, but all managements have
exploited, year after year: basin' huge
profits on a wage system which is as
corrupt as it is unchallenged-

**
**
**
**
**
**

A couple of men glance at each other and nod; fair point.
 HEADLINE: **FORD STRIKERS LEAD WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVE**

RITA (CONT'D)
 Which begs the question, why? Why is it
 like that? And the answer is, us! Because
 we've never said no.

**
 **
 **
 **

62 INT. FORD MAIN PLANT - DAY

62 **

In the more modern main plant, we see Albert, then Dave
 who is holding up a copy of the Dagenham and Redbridge
 Echo. BANNER HEADLINE: **MANAGEMENT DENY CRISIS**. Then we
 hear Rita's voice, gliding, over the picture.

**
 **

RITA
 We've meekly stepped forwards, despite
 what we've seen with our mothers and our
 grandmothers and we've taken our pay
 packets and we've tugged our forelocks
 and we've said "thank you very much."
 Well, no more! The time has come for all
 women to say: Enough! We do not accept
 this!

**
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **
 **

We hear applause. And see Eddie, smiling bashfully, as a
 picture of Rita, campaigning, is pointed out to him,
 beneath the banner.

**

63 EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

63

The applause fades as Rita steps down from the platform.
 She is immediately approached by several reporters and
 other union officials.

ALBERT

Rita...

She turns. Albert indicates a young man who stands away
 from the crush.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
 There's a bloke here from The Times.

Rita tries not to react. MUSIC ENDS

64 EXT. BARBECUE - DAY

64

A copy of The Times sits on a recliner beside the crystal
 clear water of an outdoor swimming pool into which
 children are leaping. It is red hot and the vast garden
 of JEB HARDEY, sixty, boss of Ford America, looks
 Panavision wide and technicolour bright.

His senior management team are with him, gathered around a barbecue at which he cooks, while their wives deal with the children.

KRONNFELD

I thought your boy said he could handle this?

A man with a leathery face and buzz cut hair stares at Tooley who sighs.

KRONNFELD (CONT'D)

And do we even know what we're dealing with here? Socialist Workers Party;
(MORE)

KRONNFELD (CONT'D)
 Workers Revolutionary Party;
 Revolutionary Communist Party?...Who's
 she with?

He holds up a photo: RITA.

TOOLEY
 I don't think she's *with* anyone. I don't
 even think she's a communist. She-

HARDEY
 Looks a lot like Rita Heyworth. Very
 sexual woman.

Hardey flips a burger. All of the other men stare at him,
 then carry on.

TOOLEY
 She hasn't got a background in politics,
 in or outside the union, her husband's a
 moderate...She's just got a beef-

KRONNFELD
 A beef! That's what she's got? Bobby, if
 this woman gets what she wants and Ford
 Motors is forced to introduce equal pay
 for men and women in the UK...we'll end
 up havin' to do it right across the
 world!

A noise. The old bugger heard that alright - and has
 dropped his barbecue prong on the floor, a hot dog
 impaled on its end. His demeanour has changed. He no
 longer looks an affable old fool. He looks hard and
 stares at Tooley with cold eyes.

HARDEY
 Deal with it! Now!

65

EXT. GARDEN AT NUMBER TEN - DAY

65

Mrs Castle sighs, frustrated.

BARBARA CASTLE
 Prime Minister...I'm not sure you quite
 appreciate what I'm saying...

Harold Wilson turns. He has a dog on a lead. Mrs Castle
 looks at it distastefully. Wilson considers Mrs Castle
 and then walks on. She follows, struggling, as her heels
 sink into the grass. Two of her undersecretaries follow
 her.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
 As of 5pm last night, there were 403
 strikes in progress nationally. With a
 further fifty set to commence today-

She stops suddenly. Because Wilson has stopped. Because
 the dog is clearly about to take a crap. He looks at it
 fondly. Mrs Castle winces-

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
 It's anarchy, Harold!

He hears her aggrieved tone; turns, awkwardly.

HAROLD WILSON
 And I'm not saying I won't legislate-

He stops; looks back down. The dog has finished already.
 He frowns.

HAROLD WILSON (CONT'D)
 It's always white when he goes to the
 toilet. But he never eats anything white.
 (Mrs Castle is stunned)
 Mary gives him the odd fruit gum-

BARBARA CASTLE
 Prime Minister-

He blinks; he hears his title; as he was supposed
 to...But the dog now trots on. Wilson gladly follows. And
 Mrs Castle, too! She will not be deflected-

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
 -You asked me to do this job; you
 appointed me-

HAROLD WILSON
 You're very capable, Barbara-

BARBARA CASTLE
 I know I am! Provided I get some support!
 (sinks again, yanks her foot
 free and catches up)
 You *must* introduce new bills; which give
 me the power to regulate the Unions! I
 can't get the county back to work
 otherwise-

HAROLD WILSON
 I understand that...
 (she looks hopeful)
 But all I'm saying...
 (her heart sinks)
 (MORE)

HAROLD WILSON (CONT'D)
 -is that we have to acknowledge that without the unions there would be no Labour Party...

One of her undersecretaries leans in.

UNDERSECRETARY
 They currently provide 80% of Party funding, Minister. It's a very close relationship-

She stops; so does he.

BARBARA CASTLE
 Young man! I was a member of the Trades Union Movement while you were still at your mother's breast...So unless you have something to add which goes beyond the blindingly obvious, I'd prefer it if you kept quiet!

The man remains rooted to the spot, terrified, while Mrs Castle totters on, catching up with Wilson.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
 Harold, no body supports the Unions more than me. But the situation is out of control-
 (shouts)
 The tail is wagging the dog!

This stops him. He looks back, cornered. But then he smiles.

HAROLD WILSON
 Jack Scamp!
 (her face falls)
 He's your man. Any...impasse...get Jack in. Sits them all round a table; beer and pork pie. Straight taking negotiation...
 (nods)
 He's the way forward.

Mrs Castle takes a deep breath and nods.

BARBARA CASTLE
 Beer and pork pie...Might not do for the latest one. Down at Ford.
 (Wilson frowns)
 187 Machinists. All women...Perhaps get a finger buffet in, eh?

She turns, starts to walk, sinks, takes off her shoes then strides back across the lawn, thunderous.

66	OMITTED	66	**
67	INT. TUBE - DAY	67	**
	A city gent, in suit and bowler, stands silently with many other commuters on their regular run into the City. He looks uneasy. And as we pass along his carriage, we see the girls crushed at its far end, chatting excitedly, their protest paraphernalia causing considerable disruption. The city gent looks distastefully away. But then he leaps and his hand goes to his backside. Someone has pinched his arse. Then we see Brenda, close by. She smiles sweetly.		
67A	EXT. LONDON TUBE - DAY	67A	**
	The girls emerge from the tube, blinking into the bright sunlight. They are gossiping madly, excited and some, a little overawed.		** ** **
	RITA Come on, then, girls! Get yourselves organised!		** ** **
	EILEEN Anyone fancy a Wimpy?...I'm starvin'-		** **
	Rita turns, distracted-		**
	MONICA We ain't got time to see the sites, have we?		** ** **
	RITA No, we have not!		** **
	Now Sandra appears in tiny shorts and a skimpy top. She looks round, urgently.		** **
	SANDRA Where's all the press, then?		** **
	CONNIE We ain't there yet!		** **
	BRENDA We gotta get to parliament first, you silly sod-		** ** **
	RITA (frustrated) Exactly!		** ** **
	BRENDA So?...Which way is it?		** **

Rita looks round. Then she sighs, having to come clean-

RITA
(to girls)
I think it's this way, isn't it?

The girls all look in different directions. Clearly no one knows.

68 EXT. PARLIAMENT - DAY

68 **

The girls stand on a small lawned area outside the Houses of Parliament. They unroll banners, hold up placards and huddle into a group.

MONICA
(worried)

Rita looks up from where she's unrolling a banner. Monica is nodding across the lawn. Rita follows her gaze and sees a dozen press men now approaching. Rita stands.

CONNIE
Go on, Rita...Tell 'em what's what-

And Rita nods, stepping forwards to meet them. Eileen then leans into Connie.

EILEEN
I can't help thinkin' some of us are here
for different reasons than others-

She nods to the other side of the lawn where Sandra is posing for two photographers who have approached from a different direction. Brenda grins.

BRENDA
Naah. Fair play to her...she never gives up.

The press shoved closer, asking questions. A second and Sandra is back, shoving in next to Connie-

SANDRA
It's actually quite interesting,
politics. When you get down to it...

69

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

69

Mrs Castle sighs. She is leafing through more reports of industrial unrest. Then she becomes aware of the pips outside-

70

EXT. PARLIAMENT - DAY

70

Interviews over, the girls are gathered beneath Rita's banner. Another car toots...and another. The girls wave. Men shout encouragement.

CONNIE

It's unbelievable...I never thought we'd get this backing-

More pips and shouts. A driver leans from the cab of a passing van and calls across.

DRIVER

Here, I finish work at four. Give us a call!

His mate laughs. The girls wave back, blithely. More pips and Rita frowns. She looks up, at the banner she holds. A moment.

RITA

Girls...I think we're not entirely unfurled.

All of them look up to the banner. It says: WE WANT SEX

71

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WHITEHALL OFFICES - DAY

71

Mrs Castle looks out of her window. Sees the banner.

BARBARA CASTLE

I know the feeling.

She walks back to her stressful work. While outside we see Connie help Rita frantically untwist the banner which is now lain on the grass. WE WANT SEX EQUALITY is revealed. Rita, flustered, gestures for the girls to re-group. Most are giggling.

72

INT. DOCK CLUB - DAY

72

A TV IMAGE. OF THE PROTEST JUST SEEN, OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT.

REPORTER

What makes this strike different-
 -is that it's not about a specific pay
 settlement-

THE TV PICTURE CUTS TO THE REPORTER AT WESTMINSTER. HE TALKS TO CAMERA NOW-

REPORTER (CONT'D)

-but the whole issue of sex
 discrimination-

THE TV PICTURE CUTS TO RITA. SHE IS BEING JOSTLED OUTSIDE WESTMINSTER. FLASH BULBS POP AROUND HER AND MICROPHONES ARE SHOVED INTO HER FACE.

A cheer in the background. And ON SCREEN we see-

REPORTER THREE

How long are the girls prepared to stay out?

REPORTER TWO

It must be starting to bite now-

RITA

As long as it takes-

REPORTER TWO

Does your husband support you in all this?

Another cheer in the background.

EILEEN

He has to!

RITA

He...supports me...We always support the men when they come out.

REPORTER THREE

What about the other Ford women; in Liverpool? Are they behind you?

RITA

They will be.

Several reporters call out. One persists.

REPORTER TWO

Does it bother you you've been described as a Revlon Revolutionary?

REPORTER

Have they been in touch? About doing some modelling work for them.

Laughter from the reporters. Rita smiles.

RITA

I prefer to concentrate on the issues of the strike-

A PHOTO FLASHES. RITA TURNS HER HEAD TOWARDS IT. THEN THE TV PICTURE CUTS TO OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN EMBASSY.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

-After the March protests in Grosvenor Square, this months student riots in Paris-

TV PICTURE IS REPLACED BY A TEST MATCH.

DAVE (V.O.)

Ha! Ain't that somethin'?

73

INT. DOCK CLUB - DAY

73

Dave and Eddie turn from the TV, pints in hand.

EDDIE

Yeah. She's doin' alright.

DAVE

And she mentioned you...On the television...

(jabs finger at Eddie)

You gotta smart woman there, Eddie.

Eddie nods, uneasily. Then smiles. He glances at his watch.

EDDIE

I gotta get goin'-

DAVE

Already?

EDDIE

I know...I gotta fetch the kids...

(Dave frowns)

Rita reckons they won't be back 'til gone six, so...I need to get 'em sorted.

He smiles ruefully at Dave and downs his pint.

GEORGE

You tell her to get her finger out. When you see her.

And for the first time we notice George, sitting on a stool by the bar. He stares at his half of mild, not looking at Dave or Eddie.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Gone on long enough now.

EDDIE
(laughing)
I don't think they're deliberately draggin' it out, George-

GEORGE
It's alright for you and him. Two wages in the house. I've got me war pension and I've got what she earns. That's it...I can't afford a bastard strike.

EDDIE
I know that...And they'll settle it; soon as they can.

George says nothing more. Eddie nods and goes.

74

EXT. LIVERPOOL FACTORY - DAY

74

A coach pulls up outside a factory gate. On it is written: FORD, HALEWOOD. Rita gets off. Several of the girls follow.

75

EXT. LIVERPOOL FACTORY - DAY

75

Rita stands on a soap box outside the main factory. She is sweating, passionate, addressing a crowd of women.

RITA
-You're doin' the same work for Ford, here in Liverpool, that we're doin' for 'em down in Dagenham. So you know that our job is skilled...But I'm askin' you to think beyond that...I'm askin' you to strike now for all women, not just machinists, until every one of us gets fairness and is entitled to the same pay as men!...Will all those in favour, put their hands in the air now, please-

They do. Rita beams, delighted.

76 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING 76

The kids sit at the dining room table. Smoke spills from the kitchen. They glance at each other. Look slightly worried.

77 INT. RITA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING 77

The kitchen is a mess as Eddie, sweat dripping from his nose, tries to fry a piece of liver. A huge flame leaps up from under the pan as spitting oil hits the gas. Eddie leaps back, cursing, then goes back to the food, his jaw tight.

78 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING 78

Eddie drops newspaper wrapped fish and chips onto Sharon's plate. Sharon glances at Graham. She is struggling not to snigger as she undoes the package and takes a chip. Graham laughs out loud as he receives his bundle of food. Eddie looks thoroughly pissed off.

79 OMITTED 79

80 INT. BUS - EVENING 80

The girls drive back from Halewood. Rita, sitting at the front, with Connie beside her, glances out over burnished countryside, a low red sun throbbing in the sky. Across the aisle, also at the front, Sandra has a transistor radio on her lap, a single ear piece in. She starts to sing, quietly as she looks out of the window-

SANDRA

Once upon a time, there was a tavern,
 where we used to raise a glass or two-
 (Brenda, next to her, looks
 across)

Remember how we laughed away the hours-

Brenda starts to sing. And then Connie joins in.

BRENDA, CONNIE

Think of all the great things we would do-

Rita sings. And others, too. Sandra realises, then, smiling, continues in full voice with the rest:

ALL

Those were the days, my friend, We
 thought they'd never end, We'd sing and
 dance forever and a day-

(Rita laughs)

We'd live the life we'd choose, We'd
 fight and never lose, For we were young
 and sure to have our way-

81

EXT. BUS - EVENING

81

The bus slips through the warm, summer night-

ALL (V.O.)

La La La La La La-

81A

EXT. HOPKINS HOUSE - DAY

81A

Hopkins opens his front door and approaches Tooley, who is getting out of a taxi.

HOPKINS

Welcome. How was your flight?

TOOLEY

Long.

HOPKINS

I'm so sorry to drag you over.

TOOLEY

They're taking this very seriously. At board level.

HOPKINS

Come in. My wife's cooking dinner...

They walk into the house.

82

INT. HOPKINS HOUSE - NIGHT

82

Hopkins passes into a modern, late sixties, detached house. Tooley follows.

TOOLEY

Really, I **don't want to be any trouble.**

**

HOPKINS

Honestly...Least I can do...Let me take your coat.

Hopkins wife appears in a pinny. Lisa.

HOPKINS (CONT'D)

Lisa...This is Robert Tooley-

TOOLEY

Delighted to meet you at last.

LISA

Likewise.

They shake. Then Hopkins hands Tooley's coat to Lisa.

TOOLEY

I was saying to Peter; I'm quite happy to
eat later; at the hotel-**
**

HOPKINS

Nonsense! She loves to cook.

(glances at Lisa)

Don't you?..Just relax. Have a drink.
I'll run you back when we're finished.

Hopkins passes his coat to Lisa too and ushers Tooley through into the sitting room. Lisa looks at the coats and then hangs them up.

83

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

83

Rita walks into the house, excited. The place is chaotic but it seems hardly to register as she smiles, seeing Eddie arriving at the foot of the stairs. He bends stiffly to pick up some clothes, then straightens and spots her. She beams.

EDDIE

Go alright, then?

RITA

I slaughtered 'em! Every single one come out!

EDDIE

Well done.

He moves into the kitchen and starts to collect the plates. She follows.

RITA

It was incredible though, Eddie! To start with. A load of 'em said, while they was happy to support their fellow machinists...union solidarity and all that...they didn't actually agree with equal pay as a principal. Men deserved more...Can you believe that?

He looks at her; her ebullience. And suddenly feels troubled. But he manages a smile.

RITA (CONT'D)

I'll go and check on the kids. Give 'em a quick kiss.

She pecks him on the cheek and goes. He stares at the cluttered table. His effort. Anger swells.

EDDIE

Yeah. I managed alright. Thanks.

84

INT. HOPKINS HOUSE - NIGHT

84

Lisa clears away. Bottles of beer sit on the table.

TOOLEY

Thank you.

HOPKINS

Can you bring some brandy glasses back in with you?

She nods and smiles. Then turns to go.

TOOLEY

Lisa...You must have a quite head on your shoulders...Peter tells me you read history. At Cambridge-

LISA

Yeah-

She nods, proudly but then suddenly becomes aware of the plates in her hand. She puts them on the sideboard.

TOOLEY

So whadda you make of our little problem; over at the factory?

(nods to Peter)

Think maybe he's a bit too much velvet glove and not enough iron fist?

She seems uncertain, then shrugs, relaxing.

LISA

I don't actually. Just the opposite. Look at Vauxhall. They don't appear to have any problem with the unions and that seems to me because General Motors have a much more collaborative approach to management. Whereas at Ford, you seem only to deal with the unions because you have to...You tolerate them. And as a result they're much more entrenched and aggressive in the way that they deal with you.

Tooley looks at her. Then he smiles.

TOOLEY

That's a very...progressive point of view, Lisa.

(turns to alarmed Hopkins)

Isn't it?

He stares at Hopkins, his expression at once benign but threatening. Hopkins hesitates, then turns to Lisa. He smiles, but it's a fragile thing. Then-

HOPKINS
Cheese.

LISA
What?

HOPKINS
We've...got some
Stilton...Why don't you...get that
out?...Some grapes.

Lisa is wrong footed. She looks to Tooley for support. He doesn't meet her eye.

TOOLEY
That'd be terrific.

Hopkins smiles, relieved. Lisa colours; she is dismissed. She picks up the plates, glances at her husband and leaves the room.

85 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

85

Lisa drops the plates into the sink and leans back against the draining board, trembling. On the table is a copy of the Daily Mail, it's headline: FORD WOMEN FIGHT ON. Beneath it is a picture of a rally and a woman speaking out. There is something familiar about the woman. Lisa crosses and picks up the paper. Her face - as she sees it is Rita.

86 EXT/INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

86

Rita checks the temperature on the oven. Then she crosses to her bag which is on a chair beside the set kitchen table and removes her purse. It is empty.

**

Her jaw tightens and she crosses to a cupboard near the door. Inside is a metal box, full of shoe polish, cloths and brushes. Also in there is a puncture repair kit. She opens this and reveals some crumpled notes and a few coins. She takes some of the cash, not all, and shoves it into her wallet. She grabs her bag and hurries into the hall.

87 EXT/INT. RITA'S HOUSE - BALCONY - DAY

87

Graham is coming downstairs.

RITA
It's in the oven. Don't burn yourself-

He wordlessly moves into the kitchen. And Rita pulls on a jacket. She turns and stops. Sharon is there. Her hair is in pig tails. One bunch is massively bigger than the other, while one is a tangled mess.

RITA (CONT'D)
What happened?

SHARON
Dad.

Rita stares and goes towards her. Then she stops.

RITA

I gotta go see Albert. Just tell him to
have another go.

**

Sharon slips into the kitchen and Rita ties on a head
scarf as Eddie comes down the stairs. She nods to the
kitchen.

RITA (CONT'D)

's all ready...
(crosses to placards against
wall)You're alright gettin' 'em off to school,
aren't you?

He watches her pick up the placards.

EDDIE

Course.

She turns. Immediately he moves towards the kitchen.

RITA

Eddie-
(he stops)
Everything's okay, innit?

He stares at her, then shrugs.

EDDIE

Yeah. Why wouldn't it be?

She smiles, relieved and moves to the door. He watches
her, then fingers the collar of his shirt.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

This is me last one.

RITA

What?

EDDIE

Shirt. I just noticed.

RITA

(wrong footed)
Yeah...Sorry. I missed washin' Monday.
I'll do it tonight.He nods. And walks into the kitchen. A second. Rita
stares at the empty doorway then leaves.The girls are queuing up for strike pay which Albert
hands out from a table near the stage. There is much
banter between the girls.

Rita passes Albert a sheet with names on it and removes one covered with signatures.

ALBERT
Thanks Rita-

A young woman steps forward- **

MONICA
Monica Dawson-

ALBERT
There you go-

He passes her the list. She signs and then Rita hands her three notes. Monica stares at the money.

RITA
It's still three quid, love. Don't matter how you count it!

MONICA
I know...just...'bout covers me rent and that's it-

EILEEN
Hey, Mon; you're short of anything, you just gotta ask-

Eileen is next in line. Monica smiles, grateful. But then she shakes her head. **

MONICA
No. I'm alright. Thanks. I'll manage. **

ALBERT
It's all the Union can afford, Monica...

She nods. She knows that. And she goes, slipping the money in her purse. Eileen steps forward-

EILEEN
Eileen Scott.

She bends over to sign. Brenda waits two or three girls behind her and lights a cigarette. She sucks greedily on the fag, then notices a woman waiting behind her, about thirty, looking longingly at the fag- **

BRENDA
It's me last one. Sorry, love. **

She shows her the empty packet. The girl smiles, disappointed. She nods, looks ahead, towards Albert. **

Brenda sighs. She takes her cigarette from her mouth, and tears it in two. **

She lights one end against the other and then gives half
to the girl who beams, delighted.

**
**
**

**

89

INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - DAY

89

Monty stands with Grant and Hopkins. He tries to look confident. In fact, he's uneasy. The whole room is. Then, suddenly, the door bursts open and Tooley strides in, a file under one arm. He slings it onto a far desk as Hopkins tries to assert control.

**

HOPKINS

Monty. This is Mr Tooley. He-

TOOLEY

I need you to break the strike for me, Mr Taylor...As soon as you can.

**

**

Monty glances at Hopkins who also looks a little surprised. Monty scoffs.

MONTY

I'm not sure you appreciate whose side I'm on-

TOOLEY

Oh, yes, I do. I've been going through your file-

MONTY

File?

TOOLEY

You're on your side, Mr Taylor.

**

MONTY

I beg your pardon!? I-
(to Hopkins)

I don't have to listen to this-

He moves towards the door

TOOLEY

Keep going! And six months from now, your union won't exist.

Monty stops. Despite himself. He turns back.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

Industry can't afford to pay women the same rates as men. Fact. If it's forced to, it will collapse under the extra wage bill, its workers will be laid off, their union subscriptions will disappear and so, finally, will the unions which collect them. That's you...Monty.
(MORE)

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

Which means you will no longer have a
reason to visit these gentlemen here via-
(flips open file)

The Berni Inn, is it?...The Queen's Head,
The Chequers-

(looks up)

Jeez, that's a lot've restaurants...Not
to mention the all expenses paid trips to
the party conferences. Union conferences-

(spots something)

To Paris! The Gallic rank and file. Good
on you, Monty!

Monty blinks; afraid. Tooley walks across and leans right
into him.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

These women get what they want, you're
fucked. So why don't you start thinking
less about what your union can do for you
and more what you can do for your
union...Go break the strike!

Monty trembles, humiliated, then walks numbly from the
office. A long silence. Tooley looks to the others.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

Personnel files...Everyone's got a weak
spot. You just gotta find it.

90

EXT. RIVER PLANT - DAY

90

The women are now on picket before their entrance gates
and a lorry delivering supplies, turns away in support of
them. The women all cheer. The lorry pips as it drives
back up the road.

BRENDA

Definite.

Rita frowns; looks over to Brenda and Eileen

EILEEN

Maybe if I was desperate.

BRENDA

He was lovely! And supportive-

EILEEN

He had cross eyes-

Rita sees a figure approaching-

RITA

Hello, love! Thought you weren't comin' -
 (hands across money)
 Got your strike pay. Albert let me have
 it -

Connie looks at it, takes it and nods. But she is hassled. She places her bag on the kerb beside several others, then steps across to join the chatting girls. Rita lowers her voice.

RITA (CONT'D)

You alright?

CONNIE

Yeah...Fine.

Connie looks up the road. But she is aware of Rita staring at her; not convinced. Connie sighs, then steps back to rummage in her bag: a diversion. Rita moves over. Connie lowers her voice.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

-Was a load've press outside the Labour Exchange. They cornered George...
 (Rita is confused)

"Had he fought for a country where the women'd turn out to be more militant than the men?" -

RITA

Silly sods.

Connie frowns; that's not what she meant.

CONNIE

Yeah.

But then, a bell sounds briefly. Rita looks across. A dark blue police van pulls up.

SANDRA

What they doin' here?

Three or four policemen get out of the van.

BRENDA

Hello boys. Nothin' too physical. Til we're on first name terms. I'm Brenda-

The girls all laugh. A young PC, about twenty, speaks:

COPPER

You gotta move.

The hilarity stops in an instant.

RITA

What?

COPPER

You're trespassin'.

RITA

No, we ain't. We're picketin'-

COPPER

You can't. Not here.

CONNIE

(annoyed)

Yes, we can. It's our right!

COPPER

Not here!

He is firm. The girls are stunned.

COPPER (CONT'D)

You can do it at the bottom of the High Street-

(points way back to town)
But this road, all the way back to town,
Ford built. So it's private property and
since you're on strike you're actually
out of contract which means you are
trespassin'. You gotta move to the public
highway-

CONNIE

We can't turn the lorries round from
there-

COPPER

I'm sorry!...Look, who's in charge?

Everyone looks at Rita but Connie steps forward.

CONNIE

I'm shop steward-

Rita turns, wrong footed-

COPPER

Right. I need you to get these women out
of here.

He nods and then opens his arms wide as if to corral the
women up the road-

CONNIE

Get your hands off me-

COPPER

I ain't touched you-

RITA
It's alright, Connie-

CONNIE
No. It ain't alright!

COPPER
(to Connie)
Will you just move-

CONNIE
No!

Rita is worried, the situation starting to boil-

BRENDA
Yeah, sod off! We ain't doin' nothin'
wrong-

The women link arms. Connie is on the end of the line.

COPPER
You are! And you gotta shift!

He shoves Connie forwards. She pulls away.

CONNIE
Get off me! You ignorant bugger-

COPPER
Right! Lads-

He beckons the other coppers. And grabs Connie.

RITA
Leave her!

CONNIE
Get off! COPPER
Come here-

Connie kicks her heel hard into his shin. He cries out, letting go. But the other coppers grab her as the girls shove back against them. A huge melee ensues. The press take photos and Sandra tries to smile, even as she's shoved one way and the other. In a moment, though, Connie, screaming, is extracted, shoved in the van and the coppers are away. Silence immediately falls and Rita looks to Brenda, shocked.

Monty stands looking out of a window at the aftermath of the skirmish. A pay phone is close by, on the wall. Monty feels sick.

92

INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

92

A clock ticks. And ticks. Then we see George. He sits at home. He is in an armchair but is perched right on the edge of the seat. He looks at the time. Then back to a spot on the far wall. He suddenly screws his eyes tight shut and grimaces. A second and he opens his eyes again. Wherever he is, he's utterly terrified.

93

INT. POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

93

Brenda, Rita and Eileen are all piled into the station and Rita speaks to the uniformed desk clerk. She is incredulous.

RITA

You can't just keep her in.

CLERK

We can do what we like while she's hysterical-

RITA

Course she's hysterical! She's been in a bleedin' police cell all afternoon-

(gathers her own emotions)

Please. Just let me speak to her.

CLERK

She ain't allowed visitors-

RITA

I'm not visitin'! I'm tryin' to sort things out-

TOOLEY (O.S.)

Excuse me!...Can I help here?

Tooley pushes through the women.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

I only just found out...A question of trespass, I gather? On Ford property?

CLERK

Who are you?

TOOLEY

(pushing ID over)

I represent Ford Motors, Sir, and we have no desire to press charges here.

(Rita stares at Tooley, immediately uneasy)

Protest is a basic right in all free and democratic countries.

CLERK
There's also a matter of assault-

TOOLEY

Is that so? Well, I'm quite sure it was a minor thing. And with all these ladies here as witnesses, plus the view of another of my employees who clearly saw the incident with the middle aged woman...I'm sure you'd be just as happy as me if it went right away.

The clerk hesitates, then bolts from his desk into a back room. Tooley turns, smiles.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

Robert Tooley, Mrs O'Grady. A pleasure to meet you.

She's shocked he knows her name. Then Tooley produces a card from an inner pocket. He holds it out-

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

Anytime you wanna come in, have a chat with me...

(she takes the card)

Talk about settling this thing-

(she looks him in the eye)

Just give me a call.

(starts to go; looks back)

It's my job to make things happen, Mrs O'Grady. I can make all sorts of things happen.

And he's gone.

BRENDA

Christ...I thought Boris Karloff was scary.

Rita nods, gathering herself and her tumbling emotions.

RITA

It's fine. We can handle him...Shows how much they're frightened of us...Sendin' in the heavy brigade-

A cheer of support. Rita makes to say more-

But a voice cuts through.

CONNIE

Can we go now...I wanna go home.

Connie is there; standing by an inner door which closes behind her. She is visibly upset. The girls flock to her. A half beat and Rita, a little awkward, goes, too.

93A EXT. CONNIE'S HOUSE

93A

Connie enters her house.

94

INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

94

Connie closes her door. She looks pale. A second as she gathers herself. Then she walks towards the sitting room, calling out, brightly-

CONNIE
I'm back, George-

But there is no-one there, his chair empty.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
George?

She passes into the kitchen. Nothing. And now she's looking slightly anxious. She calls generally, to the house...

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I'm home, love-

And she hurries from the kitchen to the stairs. We see her run up them.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
George!

Then we hear her upstairs. Front bedroom, back bedroom and running back down the stairs. She looks scared.

95

EXT. WASTELAND - LATE AFTERNOON

95

George wanders across a bleak, barren expanse of open ground. His steps are jerky, ragged. He looks wretched.

96

EXT. DAGENHAM ESTATE - LATE AFTERNOON

96

We hear shouts from the girls. They are calling George's name as they search the estate. Rita and Connie appear at the foot of a twitchell.

CONNIE
Christ-

RITA
He'll turn up-

CONNIE
I said. I said I'd be back at two-

RITA
Connie-

CONNIE
(shouts)
George!

Rita looks stressed but knows she must remain calm.

RITA
Maybe he's down the Dock Club-

CONNIE
(bitter)
What with?

They hear Brenda calling George. Then see her, emerging from a side road, unsuccessful. Connie looks dreadful. Rita, too.

97 EXT. WASTELAND - LATE AFTERNOON

97

Graham, still in school uniform, carrying a football, heads home. He frowns; recognising the figure sitting on a fly tipped bench. It is George. Graham moves over.

GRAHAM
Hello Mr Andrews...You alright?

George says nothing. There is a hint of spittle in the corner of his mouth. Graham is unsure. He glances round, then sits beside George.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Just been playin' football. I was Bobby
Moore...
(nothing from George)
I should get home for me tea-

He starts to move. But George reaches out and takes his hand. Graham is shocked at first; but then he looks into George's eyes and sees the fear. And shock gives way to worry and he finally sits back, holding the older man's hand.

98 EXT. EDGE OF WASTELAND - ESTATE - LATE AFTERNOON

98

Connie, Rita, Eileen, Monica all crying out for George. And in them all we hear the gathering concern, the insistence.

CONNIE
Oh, God! Where is he-

She seems about to set off in another direction when she stops. Her breath catches. There he is. Walking with Graham. Graham still holding his hand. Graham bringing him home. Connie's eyes fill and she runs towards her husband. Rita exhales, feeling the gathering pressure.

99

INT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON

99

Gordon sits in the empty warehouse reading the paper. A man with a clipped 'tash and severely parted hair stands to one side shouting into the phone.

FRANK

Don't you take that tone with me! I-
(stops; listens; then-)

There aren't any! That's what I'm sayin':
You've had 'em all! There are no more
finished seats...full stop!

He slams the phone down. Then he takes a deep breath and gathers himself. He walks past Gordon who looks up from his paper.

GORDON

Frank!

Frank glances across

GORDON (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do, then?

FRANK

(matter of fact)

Go home.

GORDON

What?

Frank stops by the door. He turns; looks serious-

**

FRANK

No more seats...no more job.

**

Frank leaves. Gordon's face as he realises he's being laid off. He is stunned. And angry.

100

INT. FORD MAIN PLANT - AFTERNOON

100

The assembly line stops.

101

INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

101

Hopkins scrambles for his phone, terrified and dials-

102

EXT. DAGENHAM HIGH STREET - AFTERNOON

102

A pale Rita walks through Dagenham's deserted streets. She is exhausted. But then, a man cycles up the hill. Then another. She checks her watch and frowns. Too early.

But more sweep by until finally, a huge tide of cyclists pass by her. One or two men glance at her as they go. Finally, she stops an older man, moving slowly.

RITA
What's goin' on?

MAN
You done it...
(she is uncertain)
They've laid everyone off-
(she blinks)
You've shut the factory down.

He rides on. Rita wobbles.

RITA
I...I gotta see Albert.

Rita runs off, through the tide of men flooding onto the streets.

103 INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

103

Tooley watches Hopkins who paces his office.

HOPKINS
That's it. We're buggered! We can't make cars with no bloody seats in 'em!

He inadvertently snaps a pencil he's holding. He throws it in the bin.

TOOLEY
Relax-

HOPKINS
Relax! The entire workforce of my main plant is going home!

TOOLEY
Good.
(Hopkins blinks)
This is what we want-

Tooley is smiling, reasonable. Hopkins, incredulous, makes to speak-

TOOLEY (CONT'D)
We're trying to make the girls go back to work.
(MORE)

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

And now, we've got five thousand men out of a job, as well...Their husbands and boyfriends...Which means, in a very short time, when those men can't afford their booze and their soccer and their gambling...they'll do our job for us...

104

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

104

Albert and Rita stare at the facade from inside a CAFE. Albert still wears his Ford overalls. A note pad sits beside them on the table and several empty packets of crisps are screwed up in the ashtray.

ALBERT

Now's the critical time, Rita. You gotta drive them girls forward-

RITA

I know that!

She does. And he smiles, nodding, acknowledging it.

ALBERT

You need to keep an eye on the Union, too. Now the lads've all been made redundant. They'll be nervous. And Monty! Ford's rattled him. I can tell. So careful what news you share with him!

**
**

She nods. Meets Albert's eye. He suddenly smiles and clenches his fists.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Hold on tight, girl.

105

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

105

Rita hurries into the house. She's flushed.

RITA

I'm back-

She nips into the kitchen which is in a mess. She opens the fridge. It is bare. There is a tiny piece of cheese and after checking it, she devours it. Then she walks towards the front room.

RITA (CONT'D)

Eddie?

She peers round the door. It's empty.

106

INT. RITA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

106

Rita slips into the bedroom. Eddie is laying in bed. He is reading a Haynes motorcycle Manual. He looks across and goes back to the book.

RITA

You alright?

EDDIE

Yeah...*Been busy, have you?*

**

She is instantly energized, moving to the bed and sitting close, her gaze intense.

**

RITA

Final push, Eddie; we gotta plan. The entire Main Plant closed down. Ford can't afford that-

He's looking at her now and she stops; realises-

**

RITA (CONT'D)

I mean...I'm sorry, love...It's had to come to this. For you and the lads...

**

**

He stares. Then looks back to the book.

**

EDDIE

Oh, don't you worry about us, Rita...We was sayin' on the way out, it's nice warm weather at the moment; if they cut the gas off, we'll hardly notice.

He glances back and smiles. Then, it's face in the book again. Rita frowns. Is he joking? She stands and moves across the room and starts to undress. She turns to him, however; can't let it go.

RITA

Thing is, I know how you feel, love: gettin' laid off. 'Cause've all them times us girls've supported you men; and it's meant no work for us.

He looks across the room. His eyes fiery. Half a second and he puts a lid on his emotions.

EDDIE

Yeah.

Then he's back to the book. She stiffens even more.

RITA

If you've got somethin' on your mind, Eddie-

EDDIE
I'm fine...I'd say.

Beat. She crosses to take off her make up.

RITA
Good. Cause I ain't had the easiest of days meself-

Click! His half of the room plunges into darkness. Rita stares across at Eddie, sees his hand move from the lamp to the bed while his back remains resolutely turned towards her.

107 INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

107

Connie is in bed, asleep. George is beside her. Suddenly he starts to pant. The panting gets louder and faster, as if he is hyperventilating. Connie moans, starts to wake.

GEORGE
Fuckin' skip, fuckin' skip-

CONNIE
George-

GEORGE
Closin' in! He's...closin'-

He shouts out. Connie turns on the light.

CONNIE
George, George, stop it-

GEORGE
Ahh! Ah!

He cries out the last time, wide awake. Then he sees it's her. He blinks, starts to slow his breathing.

CONNIE
It's alright. I'm here....It's okay.

She stares. He says nothing, whimpers. He looks at the bed. Then he curses, feeling something-

GEORGE
Oh...

He shifts over. The bed is wet through.

CONNIE
It don't matter. I'll change it...Here-

She drags him onto her side, towards the foot of the bed. He watches her. Then his face twists.

GEORGE
 What the fuck do you care?
 (she is confused)
 You'd sooner they threw us in the
 sanatorium...Or the fuckin' poor house-

CONNIE
 (wrong footed)
 What?

GEORGE
 (nodding; manic)
 I know what you're up to...This strike.
 Back your mates...Then when we haven't
 got a pot to piss in, with a bit've luck,
 the Social'll have me, eh?

CONNIE
 (upset)
 No! You-

GEORGE
 And then you can move another one
 in...Real fuckin' man...Look after you
 proper-

CONNIE
 (angry)
 Don't say that!-

GEORGE
 Give you a bitta cock-

CONNIE
 George!

A second and he launches himself at her-

GEORGE
 You fuckin' cow, you-

He knocks her backwards and drags himself up her body.
 She immediately tries to pin his arms to his side but he
 is flailing, crying out, howling like an animal-

CONNIE
 Stop it! George! Stop it! You're gonna
 hurt me!

And then we see him bite her, on the shoulder, like he is
 stuffing a rag in his own mouth. She cries out, in pain.
 But she grits her teeth, baring it. And finally, his
 wailing reaches a pitch and he slumps against her, spent
 and sobbing. Connie looks bereft, her own eyes filling
 immediately. She pulls him to her, holding his head
 against her chest. His convulsing body shakes the whole
 bed.

GEORGE
I'm sorry...I'm sorry-

She holds him. And we pull back and see them both, huddled together, in their small dark bedroom.

108 OMITTED 108 **

109 OMITTED 109 **

110 OMITTED 110 **

111 EXT. DAGENHAM TOWN CENTRE - AFTERNOON 111

Rita walks through town. She approaches a large brick building: Department of Labour and Social Services, Employment Exchange. One or two men pass inside and several more are gathered in groups by the gate. Rita sees them, crosses the road, and accelerates. She slows at a bus stop. She lights a cigarette with unsteady hands. Then she stops. Someone is there; it is Gordon. She smiles, relieved.

RITA
Hello, Gordon-

GORDON
Don't you fuckin' hello me!
(she blinks, shocked)
You don't have to work. You got an husband. My missus don't have to. You do, 'cause it's nice. It's a bit extra. But you don't have to...I have to fuckin' work. To pay the electric and the food and the coal. The fuckin' basics. Only now I can't. I can't shift what ain't there...You fuckin' idiot.

He strides off. Rita doesn't move, feeling sick.

112 OMITTED 112 **

113 EXT. REAR OF CONNIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 113 **

Rita passes down the side of Connie's house. She looks upset still. ** **

RITA
Connie...You in? **

She peeps over the wall. Connie is sitting on a chair by the door, bucket at her feet, peeling potatoes- ** **

RITA (CONT'D)
Could do with seein' a friendly face- ** **

She flashes an injured smile but immediately Connie's own expression shifts; becomes guilty, evasive. And Rita looks concerned. ** ** **

114 EXT. REAR OF CONNIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 114

Rita stares at Connie, upset and panicky.

RITA
You can't just stop-

CONNIE
I'm not stoppin'. I'm still on strike. I still support you- ** **

(Rita makes to speak)
I can't...be on the front line so much, that's all- ** ** **

RITA
But we need you...at the meetin's and...The younger girls look up to you- ** **

CONNIE
You're in charge, Rita! You wanted to be in charge! Of this dispute. ** **

Rita looks upset by that one and it forces Connie to turn away. She tries another tack. ** **

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I got arrested. They put us in a cell.
It's too much for me! ** **

Again they make eye contact. And this time Rita knows Connie's making excuses. Connie sees this and exhales; unable to keep up the pretence any longer. She scoffs, sadly. ** ** ** **

CONNIE (CONT'D)

What do you want me to say, Rita? George
is ill. You know that! He's touched. And
the strike's whippin' everything up...I
gotta put him first-

**
**

(Rita makes to speak)
You don't understand!

**

(frowns)
I'm not his wife no more. I'm more like
his...sister or-

(stares at Rita)
(MORE)

CONNIE (CONT'D)
But I'm his. And that's all he's got left.

**

Rita stares at her friend, her heart breaking.

**

RITA
And I ain't sayin' you gotta give up on him, Connie. Just...
(imploringly)
You count, too. Your life...And you gotta allow it to blossom, just a bit...Or the war's gonna destroy two people, Con! And that would be so wrong.

Connie stares hard at Rita.

115 INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - DAY

115

**

Tooley walks into the office where Grant **is** working. He is tense and opens a drawer aggressively. Grant closes a filing cabinet. Nothing. He sighs. But then he notices an old copy of the Dagenham and Redbridge Echo, folded on top of the cabinet. On it is a picture of Sandra, in hot pants.

GRANT
Mr Tooley...

Tooley turns, eyes greedy; he heard a thought there-

116 INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

116

Rita addresses a number of the girls, driving herself, as well as them, on.

RITA
We gotta stand firm. Everyone of us! It ain't easy...And it's gonna get harder now. Cause we ain't caved in how they thought we would. Which means they're desperate...But we've got this far, so we can get a bit further...as long as we stick together.

Rita nods, exhausted. Then she sees Connie at the back of the room. She smiles at her gratefully.

117 EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

117

The girls are starting to emerge from the house. They pass between Eileen and Brenda who hold sacks of garden produce.

EILEEN
Don't forget your veg, girls-

She hands a cauliflower to the first girl leaving-

BRENDA

I will pass on a personal thank you to Mr Horovitz from every single one of you-

She hands out veg, too. Connie, still deep in thought, grabs a cabbage and heads off, hardly acknowledging the girls.

EILEEN

She alright?

Rita is outside, too, also watching Connie leave. She turns to Eileen.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

She looks tired.

RITA

Naah. She's...she's fine...

The last cauliflower is handed over. Brenda beams as she tips the sack upside down.

BRENDA

Yes!

Monica emerges and takes Eileen's last item. Brenda immediately grabs her sack.

**

**

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Thank you-

**

**

She smiles at the girls.

**

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I may be some time...

**

She hurries off.

**

EILEEN

More beets'd be nice!

(back to Rita)

I reckon it's serious. He give her a pineapple the other day.

**

**

Rita smiles but she's still worried. And another thought occurs:

**

RITA

Here, what happened to Sandra? She don't usually miss.

MONICA

Oh, she's had some trouble at home-

**

Rita frowns, worried.

MONICA (CONT'D)

**

They cut off the electricity, apparently-

RITA

Oh, no, I...I ain't got nothin' I can
give her-

MONICA

**

Hey! Rita! It ain't your
responsibility...It's what you just said,
innit? It's gonna get tougher...And we
all know that.

Rita stares at **Monica** and nods.

**

118

INT. PHONE BOX - ESTATE - AFTERNOON

118

Sandra stands very upright in the phone box. She looks agitated. The 'phone rings and she grabs it.

SANDRA

Hello-
(posher)
Hello...Yes...Yes, it is...That's right.
He said you'd call...
(excited)
Really...?
(worry)
Oh, I see...No, I didn't realise
that...Well, I dunno, I-
(listens; brightens)
Yeah? That would be nice...I mean, it
makes sense, dunnit...Okay. **Thank you.**

**

She hangs up. She looks guilty. But set on a course.

119

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

119

Rita walks down the road, turns a corner and stops: from her house, two men are wheeling her fridge onto the back of a lorry. Eddie walks onto the doorstep, watching the scene. Rita hurries over and turns to him.

EDDIE

Last of mine went on the electric bill.
How you set?

Her jaw tightens.

120

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

120

Rita runs angrily into the kitchen. She goes straight for the shoe polish box, pulls out the puncture repair kit and opens it. It is bare. She looks furious-

121

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

121

Rita strides over to Eddie-

RITA
You spent the money-

EDDIE
Eh?

RITA
You spent the last of the emergency. Out
the repair kit.

EDDIE
I had to pay the milk man.

RITA
Why? -

EDDIE
What d'you mean -

RITA
We could'a kept him off til next week -

EDDIE
He wanted payin'! -

RITA
And you shoulda told him we didn't have
it!

(he makes to speak)
Christ, Eddie, I'm in charge of the money -
!

EDDIE
Well, you ain't much good at it are you!
Or we might have some left!
(she blinks, shocked; he
scoffs)
Welcome to the real world, Rita. This is
bein' on strike: you run out of cash and
you end up screamin' at each other.

She stares at him, ashen.

RITA
What happened to you?

Rita Stares then hurries off.

122

EXT. ESTATE / SANDRA'S MUM'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

122

Rita and Sharon, in school uniform, walk down a street.
Rita strides ahead pulling Sharon along. Sharon winces.

SHARON

Ow. Mum!

Rita stops. Realises what she is doing.

RITA

I'm sorry. Sorry, sweetheart.

She bends down and kisses her hard on the cheek.

SHARON

Why we comin' this way-

RITA

Cause we're gonna see Aunty Sandra...She
needs cheerin' up.Rita stops and knocks on a door. It opens. Sandra's mum.
Rita smiles at her sympathetically-

RITA (CONT'D)

Hello, Marge. Is she in?

MUM

No. She's gone to the factory.

(proud)

That Mr Tooley rang her. Asked for her
personal.

Rita's face. Fear.

123	EXT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON	123
Sandra waits outside the factory. She looks nervous. She walks in.		
124	OMITTED	124
125	INT. MAIN PLANT - AFTERNOON	125
Music plays quietly in the background as a photographer in his late forties, bearded, leans in towards Sandra. She wears an evening dress and long gloves. She is positioned between the harsh machinery of the shop floor and a brand new Ford Executive Saloon.		

PHOTOGRAPHER
Terrific Sandra. Head a little higher.

SANDRA
Like that?

She twists. Looks over one shoulder. She's a natural.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Yeeeess! Beautiful!

And even as he says it, at the side, a door opens and Rita and the other girls rush in-

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Bit nearer...Flat hand on the roof.

And they stop, amazed. They stare at Sandra. She looks extraordinary. Beautiful, transformed. And momentarily, they are neutered, unsure what to do. But then Sandra, as she turns, sees them.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Okay. Openinin' the door now. Lookin'
back to the machine's-

But Sandra slows, can't do it with the girls watching. And finally she stops. Then the photographer becomes aware of the other women, too, Rita to the fore now.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Right...Not to worry...Why don't we have
a break...You can go back to the caravan,
Sandra. Get changed for the next set
up!...You've done brilliantly.

Sandra stares at the girls and then rushes out in the opposite direction, slipping on a silk dressing gown as she goes.

126

INT. WARDROBE TRUCK - AFTERNOON

126

Sandra sits before a mirror, staring at herself. Then, in the mirror, she sees Rita enter at the back of the waggon. She turns. A moment.

SANDRA
It's all I've ever wanted.

RITA
I know.

Sandra's eyes fill. She shakes her head.

SANDRA

I don't really care about equal
 pay...Still a shitty factory, with dead
 birds and rain comin' in and like a sauna
 in the summer and dirty and-
 (cries; screws up face)
 I want more, Rita-

And now she's crying. Rita runs across.

RITA

Hey-

Rita comes across and hugs her. When Sandra speaks it's between sobs-

SANDRA

Tooley said he'd shown me photo...Out the paper...And this photographer'd said I'd got what it took-

RITA

(fondly)
 You have-

SANDRA

It's for a brochure. Only trade but it could lead on...Foot in the door, you know-

(breath catches)
 I don't wanna let you down. I just-

RITA

You ain't let us down. You ain't gone back yet, have you...?

(Sandra looks to Rita
 hopefully)

I mean, that is the deal, innit? They let you do this shoot and you agree you'll return to work...Only that second bit ain't happened so...

She smiles. And then Sandra looks horribly compromised

SANDRA

But...They won't use the photos, unless,
 I-

She stops; the choice is clear.

RITA

Sandra...You look amazin'...I mean, you are a model. You were doin' it, in there. They couldn't get better...You could though...Now I seen it. You really could...But it's up to you in the end.

Rita walks out. Sandra looks pale.

127

INT. RIVER PLANT - AFTERNOON

127

The photographer, now back, glances across to Brenda and Eileen, nervously. And then Tooley suddenly appears. He looks worried. He sees the two women also, and fears the worst. But then, the far door opens and Sandra walks in. She looks scared but determined as she crosses the shop floor-

PHOTOGRAPHER

Brilliant, Sandra. That's great-

He moves into position. Tooley looks triumphantly to Brenda and Eileen who stand with Sharon.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Same as before. Loads've oomph, loads've energy...

Sandra slips off the dressing gown

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Loads've, Christ-

He stops. Sandra is down to her bikini. And written on her body in red lipstick is: EQUAL PAY

SANDRA

How's that look?

Tooley trembles with suppressed rage.

128

EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT

128

The factory is deserted; shut down still and creaking with inactivity.

129

INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

129

George sits in the kitchen. He has the paper before him but doesn't read it. Then Connie enters. She is dressed up and grabs a hand bag.

GEORGE

You're goin' are you?

She turns. Frowns.

CONNIE

You know I am. I said. It's an emergency meetin'...Rita asked me to go, 'special-
(He stares. Nods)

You gotta fight for what you believe in, George. You know that. More than anyone.

He stares.

GEORGE

You think I'd do the same again. If
another war come round?

CONNIE

I know you would...Cause you're an hero.

He stares. There is utter conviction on her face.

GEORGE

I love you.

She frowns. Wrong footed. Then there is a knock on the door. It opens.

RITA

Con. You all set?...George-

Rita smiles at George. Connie looks from Rita, back to her husband. He smiles.

GEORGE

Go.

She does and the door closes. George smiles again.

130

INT. UNION OFFICES - DAY

130

Rita looks nervous. She glances at Connie. They sit in the little ante-room where Albert had been before his bollocking. And suddenly it is Albert who appears, walking in from the main office. He turns to the room behind him in which we see Bartholomew, Rogers, Monty and a couple of other Union Reps. Albert smiles at them, confidently, then virtually closes the door behind him.

ALBERT

This way, please, ladies-

The women move across. Albert lowers his voice to a whisper-

ALBERT (CONT'D)

They've hung you out to dry. Lads in the other unions've had enough. Whatever they say now, don't believe it and we'll sort it out after-

(normal voice)

If you'd follow me-

He throws open the door again and leads the women into the main chamber.

131

INT. UNION OFFICES - DAY

131

Rita's jaw is fixed. She glances at Connie.

BARTHOLOMEW

We are absolutely behind you still, Rita.
You and the girls...We ain't sayin'
otherwise-

ROGERS

And as you can see, we have got other
representatives from the other Unions
here to pledge-

RITA

You ain't got 'em all though, have you-

Albert flashes her a glance. She bites it-

BARTHOLOMEW

No...But we're very confident
we'll...prevail. The thing is, though, as
we've got the National Conference comin'
up...down Weymouth...The most sensible
thing, probably, would be just to go to a
vote-

MONTY

Which would be the actual, final, and
bindin' position, I believe, Comrade?
After which it'd be out our hands.

BARTHOLOMEW

That's right, Monty. But like I say,
we're expectin' full support.

He looks Rita in the eye.

132

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - AFTERNOON 132

The line up of Barbara Castle's posh, public school,
undersecretaries. They beam. Then we see Mrs Castle. She
looks uncertain.

UNDERSECRETARY

The Unions are turning!

UNDERSECRETARY TWO

The other unions, Minister! Normally,
they all band together-

She turns on that one-

BARBARA CASTLE

Yes. I gather it's called Solidarity-

UNDERSECRETARY

Only, they're not...Being solid. The men want to return to work. So they're telling *their* unions to withdraw support from the machinist's union and to actively put pressure on the women to end the dispute...

(beams)

They'll be back within the week.

Barbara Castle stares. Is that a tiny hint of disappointment?

BARBARA CASTLE

We'll see...

The men glance at each other, confused.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

You're assuming the girls will do as they're told.

She smiles and walks out of the room.

133

EXT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

133

Rita and Connie pass down the lane. They are fired up.

RITA

They must think we was born yesterday-

CONNIE

That Monty's a sly one, though, inni?

(mocking)

"Will the Weymouth vote be bindin'
Comrade?"

RITA

(laughs)

See how he looks when we turn up down there! Put our side of things-

They pass through the gate.

CONNIE

Sod him...You're right. We can deal with him!

RITA

We can deal with anyone, Con!

They both laugh and Connie opens the door. She screams. In the centre of the room, hanging from the ceiling, a belt around his neck, is George. He is wearing his RAF Best Blue. Rita makes a guttural, animal-like noise and then runs into the house. Connie follows, realising what Rita intends.

And Rita is there already, grabbing George round the thighs and trying to take the weight off his neck.

134

EXT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

134

A police car and an ambulance are parked on the road. A small crowd has gathered to watch. Rita is standing a little away from the scene, staring at the house. She can see Connie, through the front windows, on the settee, a blanket around her shoulders, being passed a cup of tea by a policewoman.

135

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

135

The machinists are all gathered for George's funeral. A couple of RAF greatcoats can be seen. Possibly ex crew...they're George's age. Connie stands with Brenda. Rita is with Eddie and the kids. Albert is there, too. The service nears its end and finally, the vicar closes his prayer book and moves away. The crowd presses up to Connie and people start to pass on their condolences.

RITA
I'm sorry, Connie.

Connie nods, smiles, but doesn't look Rita in the eye.

CONNIE
No, you're not.

RITA
What?

CONNIE
You thought he was a millstone. You thought he was keepin' me back-

One or two heads turn.

BRENDA
Hey, Connie that's enough!

Connie finally looks at Rita.

CONNIE
I should have been there.

Brenda leads Connie away. She has started to cry. Rita watches, her expression frozen. Eddie takes her hand supportively.

136

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - EVENING

136

Rita is alone now. We sense she's not been home all afternoon. She walks slowly onto her street, exhausted.

And then she stops. A car is parked close to her house. Lisa's. She climbs from the vehicle and smiles. Rita does her best to return the gesture as she reaches the car.

RITA
This is a surprise.

LISA
Yeah. I'm...sorry it's so late...I nearly didn't come at all.

She's nervous. Rita is too numb to see it.

RITA
You wanna pop in? I...be honest, I ain't feelin' the most chatty but-

LISA

No...I really don't want to keep you, I
just-

She looks at Rita; and loses her nerve. She smiles instead.

LISA (CONT'D)

Mr Clarke has been asked to leave the
school.

(Rita frowns; the name cuts
through)

We won. They're getting rid of him.

Rita manages to smile.

RITA

That's great. That's...brilliant.

Lisa nods. A beat. Rita looks to her front door-

LISA

I'm married to Peter Hopkins. At the
factory...

(Rita is stunned)

Had a feeling you didn't know...And I
didn't know...who you were...the strike.

She nods emphatically and smiles. Rita frowns.

RITA

I...don't understand. I-
(suddenly upset)

If you've come here to tell me to back
off...I wasn't jokin'; what's gone on
today and I'm warning you-

LISA

Keep going! Please. Please keep going.

Rita looks down. Lisa has gripped her wrist. Then Rita looks back into Lisa's eyes.

LISA (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am, Rita?

(Rita is confused)

Who I actually am? I'm Lisa Burnett. I'm
thirty one years old, with a first class
honours degree from one of the finest
universities in the world and my husband
treats me like I'm a fool.

Rita blinks and Lisa smiles, fondly-

LISA (CONT'D)

When I studied...for my degree...I
was...very happy.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

All sorts of reasons...Especially the work...I loved to read about all these extraordinary people. *Making history.* I always wondered what it felt like...

(nods)

Let me know will you...When you've finished doing it.

(kisses her on the cheek)

Don't let me down.

She gets into the car and drives off.

137

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - EVENING

137

Rita passes into her bedroom. She stares out of the window. And suddenly, she starts to cry. Great sobs which she bites back as she tries to keep quiet. And gradually, as she clenches her fists, she manages to calm herself. She takes a deep, steadyng breath. Then she crosses the room and looks at herself in the dressing table mirror. She is a mess. A second and she grabs a hanky, licks it and removes her smudged make up. Another beat. She stares at herself, determined.

138

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

138

Eddie's motorcycle is loaded with camping kit. He pushes himself back from under the side car and stares at Rita incredulously.

EDDIE
You're goin'? To Weymouth?

Then he looks back to his wife. She says nothing.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
It's...the holiday, it's...campin'. We go
campin'-

RITA
I can't-

EDDIE
Why can't you-

RITA
Because-
(gritted teeth)
If I don't see it through...Then it has
all been for nothin'...

She stares at him. Then she picks up her case and walks off down the street. He watches. His chest heaves. But then, he looks compromised. And he calls out-

EDDIE
Rita!

He runs after her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Rita!-

He catches her up. She turns.

RITA

What?

EDDIE

We gotta sort this out. Now!

(she makes to speak)

No...We have and...I know it ain't been
good...between us lately-

(again she tries to speak)

Which...I ain't about to make worse, I
promise, only...We gotta stop the rot or-

RITA

(weary)

Eddie-

EDDIE

Listen to me!

His impassioned expression slows her. He focuses.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Look. If I ain't...appreciated what you
done, properly...how you've come on
and...what you've achieved, all
that...then I'm sorry-

She doesn't want this; looks down the road.

RITA

I gotta catch a bus-

EDDIE

Rita! I am sorry...But you ain't been
perfect in all this either, you know...I
mean, just cause you believe in a
particular thing with all your heart,
that don't mean it actually *is* the most
crucial thing in the whole world...

RITA

This really ain't the time, Eddie-

EDDIE

Yes! It is! Cause it needs sayin'! I know
you reckon I'm not bothered about the
important things and I just...drift along
and I'm more interested in fiddlin' with
motorbikes and makin' tents out of head
rest covers but...I do me best. You know?

(scoffs)

Christ, I'm not out on the beer every
night or...screwin' other women, or-

(a thought)

I've never once raised me hand to you!

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Ever. Or the kids. And-
 (He stops. She is smiling)
 What? Why you lookin' like that?-

RITA
 You're a saint. That's what you're
 tellin' me, Eddie? You're a bleedin'
 saint! Cause you give us an even break...
 (thunderous)
 That's as it should be...Jesus! What **do**
 you think this strike's been all about?
 It ain't about us gettin' special
 treatment, you know...Kid gloves...It's
 been about fairness. What's proper....And
 you stand there now and lecture me about
 countin' me blessin's...
 (nods)
 Well, you're right actually...You don't
 knock us about, you don't drink, you
 don't gamble, you do join in with the
 family...
 (through gritted teeth)
 That's-as-it-should-be!...Try and
 understand that. Please. What you're
 talkin' about now...what I've been
 fightin' for, the last few weeks...Same
 thing...Rights. Not privileges.

She marches off and Eddie watches her go. He sways, as if
 he has taken a punch.

139

EXT. DAGENHAM TOWN HALL - AFTERNOON

139

The last of the girls climbs onto a coach. Rita looks
 back at the streets of Dagenham and climbs on also-

140

INT. COACH - AFTERNOON

140

The coach is full. Rita's seat is at the front as usual.
 The seat next to her, Connie's, is empty. Rita catches
 Brenda's eye and then she sits, alone.

141

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

141

Eddie sits at the kitchen table, thinking. He looks
 shocked. He blinks, noticing the unpacked camping gear
 leant against a couple of protest placards. He exhales
 slowly. But then, Graham enters the room. He sits next to
 his father. Eddie looks at him. Graham smiles. It's fine.
 A long moment and Eddie straightens.

142

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

142

The kids stand with a woman on her doorstep and wave as Eddie zooms off on his motorbike. He doesn't wave back.

143

EXT. ROAD IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

143

A hotel with a plush facade, displaying a sign: *The Tadmarton Park Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset Welcomes The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.*

**

144

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

144

The ballroom is crowded with Union delegates as the Chair, up on stage, a northerner, consults his notes.

CHAIRMAN

Very good, gentlemen. And that brings us to our main item...The ongoing dispute at Ford Motors...Can I call on Monty Taylor, Senior Convenor, Ford Dagenham.

The chairman squints. And out of the darkness comes Monty. He mounts the stage and moves across to the Chair. He whispers and then crosses to the lectern.

MONTY

Thank you Mr Chairman...I shall try and be brief-

He looks to the darkened hall, a glint in his eye.

145

EXT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

145

Eddie jumps off his bike and looks wildly round: Shit! The seafront is a mass of hotels.

146

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

146

Monty is pushing on, scared, but desperate.

MONTY

-Of course we must represent all our members...But me must also remember we live in a democracy. And in a democracy, the wishes of the majority must always hold sway. Therefore-

BRENDA (O.S.)

Monty Taylor! You two faced, hypocritical, toe rag!

A kerfuffle by the door. Monty squints into the darkness. The lights come on. The Dagenham contingent are there, Eileen by the switch, banners at the ready.

MONTY

Now hang on-

BRENDA

No, you hang on-

More rowdiness and shouts of Judas. The whole hall hums. Several delegates stand to see what's happening. Monty has moved to the front of the stage and calls out for the girls to sit down and that he'll explain, while they call back at him. Finally Monty returns and shouts into the microphone.

MONTY

Be quiet!

The noise shocks everyone into silence. Monty is embarrassed and moderates his voice.

MONTY (CONT'D)

Sorry...Gentlemen...We'll sort this out amongst ourselves later-

SCOTSMAN

(shouts; stands)

Hey, Monty! I've seen more of their mugs on the front pages these last few weeks than you've managed in twenty years!

(laughter from crowd)

I wouldnae mind hearin' from 'em.

Shouts of support. Monty looks terrified.

MONTY

No-

More shouts of support. Monty shakes his head.

147

EXT. SEAFRONT - EVENING

147

Eddie walks down the seafront and stops. Parked up ahead is a coach...From Dagenham. He runs past it and into the Hotel outside which it is parked.

148

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

148

More shouts. Monty looks trapped. Then the sound of slow stamping and clapping. Louder and louder. Then Brenda, Eileen and the others step aside. Rita is there. She walks towards the platform. And Monty looks sunk.

149

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

149

Eddie looks for a sign and runs towards the doors which lead into the hall.

150

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

150

Eddie bursts into the hall and stops right at the back. Rita is at the lectern, a light on her. All around is still. She makes to speak then stops, gathering herself; all of the emotion of the last few days sweeping over her. She stares at the people in the hall, their faces turned to her. Waiting...

RITA

My best friend lost her husband recently. Durin' the war he was a gunner in Fifty Squadron in the RAF. He got shot down one time...on a raid to Essen and even though he managed to bail out, he was badly **injured**. I asked him once, why he'd joined the raf and he said...they got the best women...

**
**

(Laughter in the hall. She nods, upset)

Which they did...

Eddie stares at Rita

RITA (CONT'D)

But then he said, you had to do somethin'. And he'd always wanted to go up in a plane...

Her jaw tightens; she feels the cause start to flood through her veins.

RITA (CONT'D)

You had to do somethin'...That was a given. Cause it was a matter of principle. You had to stand up; do what was right, 'cause otherwise you wouldn't be able to look yourself in the mirror.

(stares at hall)

When did that change? When did we, in this country, start bein' happy, to do nothin'? On what day did we decide we had no duty to fairness no more?

(The hall is silent. She nods slightly)

It has NOT changed.

(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

That is NOT us...It is not you...And we are only in this situation now, where women get paid less money than men for doing the same work...

**

(lets it sink in. Nods)

-because we was tricked. Those in power kept tellin' us: it's **fine**. You don't need to do the right thing cause there's nothin' needs fixin'. And they said it for **so** long, we ended up believin' it was right....Well it ain't right!

**

**

**

Calls of support. Heads nod in agreement.

RITA (CONT'D)

It was wrong at the start, it's wrong now, and it'll be wrong forever!-

(shouts of agreement)

-unless you back us, you stand up, you remember who you are and you accept, that *this* is a matter of principle. Women are entitled to the same rates of pay as men. And that is it. No matter the cost, no matter the difficulty, no matter them that are gonna lose out, no human being should be punished in the workplace cause've how they was born!

(Cheers. Rita calls above them-)

We are the working classes. The men and the women. We are the furnace which fires the world and without us no-body earns tuppence h'appenny!

(big cheer)

We are not separated by sex, only by the will of those who are not prepared to go into battle for what is right - and those who are!

The hall erupts. And leaps to its feet. Eddie sways.

151

INT. HOTEL IN WEYMOUTH - EVENING

151

Delegates pour out, talking excitedly about what they have just witnessed. We briefly see Eddie again, swallowed up by the crowd, being pushed backwards. And then we see our girls, emerging thrilled and elated. We hear odd snatches of conversation above a huge wall of chatter-

BRENDA

(to another woman)

I'm tellin' you! You can see 'em! Scorch
marks right up the curtains where Monty's
arse caught fire-The woman laughs. Rita smiles. Her chest still heaves.
Eileen grabs her wrist.

EILEEN

Come on, let's have a drink-

RITA

We got no money-

SANDRA

We're all signin' it to Monty's room-

The girls laugh. The scots delegate pats Rita on the
back. Some speech. Rita nods, but she is exhausted.
Brenda smiles at her.

BRENDA

Hey! Come on....You're allowed to unwind a
bit, you know...

RITA

(nods)

Yeah. 'Cept we ain't there yet, Brenda-

She stops. She is looking over Brenda's shoulder, to the
other side of revolving doors, where she can see, on the
spot where he has been spat out, Eddie. He stares in at
Rita. Then, suddenly, he turns and hurries off-

152

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

152

Rita runs after the retreating Eddie. She calls out to
him.

RITA

Eddie...Eddie!

(he finally stops; turns)

What you doin' here? **

He looks at her; slightly confused. Then...

EDDIE

I...*come* to say sorry. I mean...I
thought...about what you said and-

(shrugs)

You're right, I suppose...You are right.
(nods)

And it is amazin' what you done...*Rita*
O'Grady. And I wanna back you...I was
gonna tell you that. Only *then* I come in
when you was speakin' and I heard you
and...you was...huge...you was...like a
force-

**

**

**

**

**

He can't express it. Then he looks at her fondly and
smiles.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And *then* I thought...

(shrugs)

Not sure me backin' you makes that much
difference to be quiet honest. *Where you*
are now...

**

**

(serious; positive)
Anyway. You get back to your meeting or
whatever you gotta do. I should...

He nods, vaguely over his shoulder and sets off, walking-

RITA

Eddie!

He turns again. She shakes her head.

RITA (CONT'D)

You've said some stupid things in your
time but...

She runs to him, embraces him and kisses him hard on the
mouth. She steps back. He looks stunned.

RITA (CONT'D)

Of course you backin' me makes a
difference. It makes all the difference
in the world.

She kisses him again.

153

INT. *BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES* - DAY

153 **

Mrs Castle is holding back the slightest of smiles. She
is looking at a sheet of paper on her desk while the
undersecretaries wait in a line.

BARBARA CASTLE

"The bloody unions are back in line"-

UNDERSECRETARY
It's verbatim.

UNDERSECRETARY TWO
Our man was there.

BARBARA CASTLE
Well, well, well-
(looks to them)
So the strike remains solid. And
meanwhile, five thousand men have now
been laid off and the country has lost
export orders worth 8 million pounds...
(checks notes)
8 million.

She looks back to the undersecretaries.

UNDERSECRETARY TWO
It really *does* seem time to call in Sir Jack.

BARBARA CASTLE
Good...I'll do that then. I'll appoint a Court of Inquiry, which he can oversee. And let's hope that does the job.

She smiles. The men glance at each other and stand.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
Oh, yes. And one other thing...Set up a meeting will you.

UNDERSECRETARY
Minister?

BARBARA CASTLE
With the machinists. Their leaders.

The men glance at each other.

UNDERSECRETARY
Pardon me?

BARBARA CASTLE
I want to meet them. At my St James's Square Offices...At the earliest opportunity.

UNDERSECRETARY
But-

Mrs Castle looks at them quizzically. Yes?

UNDERSECRETARY (CONT'D)
The Minister doesn't. Do that. Never has done.

UNDERSECRETARY TWO
It'll just encourage them.

UNDERSECRETARY
Give credence to their cause.

She looks at them. Long beat. She inhales. Then:

BARBARA CASTLE
I'm what's known as a fiery red head...I hate to make this a matter of appearance...go all womanly on you but...there you have it. And me standing up like this-

(gets to her feet)
(MORE)

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)
 Is in fact, just that red headed
 fieriness, leaping to the fore...
 (voice rises furiously)
 Credence! I will give credence to their
 cause? My God. Their cause already has
 credence. It's equal pay. Equal pay is
 common justice. And if you weren't such a
 bunch of egotistical, chauvinistic,
 bigoted dunderheads, you'd realise it-

UNDERSECRETARY

I-

BARBARA CASTLE
 This is an office run by incompetents.
 And I am sick and tired of being
 patronised, spoken down to and generally
 indulged as if I was the May Queen!

(one of the men holds up a
 tremulous finger, as if to
 make a point-)

Set up the meeting!

The men scatter.

154

INT. HOPKINS OFFICE - DAY

154

Tooley glares-

TOOLEY
 Whaddya mean, The Secretary of State is
 gonna see the women? On whose say so?

Hopkins faces Tooley; scared.

HOPKINS
 On her own, I gather...Apparently, Mrs
 Castle's quite a forceful woman-

TOOLEY
 Is she!

He marches across the office and picks up his phone.

HOPKINS
 What're you doing-?

TOOLEY
 I represent Ford Motors. We are the
 biggest car manufacturer in the world. We
 pump millions of pounds into the UK
 economy...

(he dials)
 (MORE)

TOOLEY (CONT'D)
 I think it's time my bosses started
 reminding one or two people of that fact.

154A EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

154A **

Eddie's motorcycle pulls up outside Rita's house. Albert
 waits by the door. Rita looks concerned and quickly jumps
 out of the side car, hurrying over to him. For once he
 doesn't look entirely in control of his emotions-

**
**
**
**

ALBERT
 There's no need to panic, Rita. Only I've
 had a call...From Mrs Castle's office-

**
**
**

Eddie is clambering off the bike but turns suddenly as he
 hears a sharp scream of excitement. He looks down the
 drive to Rita who is turned to him, an expression of
 sheer delight on her face-

**
**
**
**

RITA
 Bloody 'ell!

**
**

She grins, thrilled!

**

155 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

155

Now Rita looks concerned as she roots through her
 wardrobe. She pulls out a dress and turns, holding it up.
 Albert sits on a chair beside Eddie, Eddie still in his
 bike gear, sitting on the bed, both gazing across at the
 impromptu fashion show like rabbits caught in a full
 headlight glare.

**
**
**
**
**
**

RITA
 Too short.

**
**

She nods in agreement. Then she looks back and selects
 another outfit. This she holds up.

**
**

RITA (CONT'D)
 Too formal.

**
**

She nods and she grabs another. She holds this up. But
 this time she doesn't say anything. She looks to the
 lads. Albert jumps at the opportunity-

**
**
**
**

ALBERT
 Lovely...that is...
 (to Eddie)
 Innit? That's-

**
**
**
**

EDDIE
 Yeah.

**
**

They both nod. Her face falls

**

RITA
You hate it...

**
**

She looks back to the wardrobe. The lads glance at each other appalled.

**
**

RITA (CONT'D)
I ain't got anythin' that's right-

**
**

And then Rita stops; has an idea...

**

156

INT. HOPKINS HOUSE - DAY

156

Hopkins is back at home. He stares sickly at the front page of the Telegraph which records the ongoing horror of Ford's plummeting sales figures. Then the door bell rings. Hopkins waits for Lisa to answer. But it rings again. He sighs and stands, crossing to the door. He opens it. Rita. He is stunned.

RITA
S'alright. I ain't come to see you. It's your missus I wanna talk to.

Lisa steps forward from behind Hopkins.

LISA
Rita...What are you doing here?

HOPKINS
Rita?!

RITA
I need a favour.

Hopkins is agog. Lisa nods.

LISA
Come inside-

HOPKINS
(annoyed)
Lisa-

LISA
What!?

Her look is hard; combative. He has not seen it before. She holds his gaze, furiously and he steps meekly to one side. Rita enters the house.

157

INT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S CAR - DAY

157

Harold Wilson puffs on his pipe as his official motor sets off around St James's Square. Mrs Castle settles next to him, having just got in. Wilson looks tense and when Mrs Castle raises an enquiring eyebrow, he gets straight to it-

HAROLD WILSON

Have you or have you not invited the Ford women to your offices?

Mrs Castle *hesitates*, momentarily. Then:

**

BARBARA CASTLE
Prime minister-

**

HAROLD WILSON

I have just spent the last half an hour on the phone to Henry Ford the Second, reassuring him that my government is *not* on the side of the strikers-

BARBARA CASTLE

It's not a question of sides. We *have* to grasp the nettle

HAROLD WILSON

By aligning ourselves with the machinists?

(she makes to deny this)
I wanted you to fix this! Not to make it worse-!

BARBARA CASTLE

And I will fix it! If you'd just...

(can't help it)

Bloody well support me!

This shocks them both. But Wilson can see her passion. He nods. Go on.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

I can resolve this dispute. I can get the women *to resume work again...* But you must back me, Harold. You must give me power and then stand shoulder to shoulder with me on this.

**
**

Wilson stares. A long beat.

**

HAROLD WILSON

Meet the women if that's what you want to do. But don't upset Ford. I've got enough trouble with the Americans as it is.

(MORE)

HAROLD WILSON (CONT'D)

158 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY 158

Rita strides through Dagenham. Pull back. She wears Lisa's Biba dress. Ahead, the other girls wait for her.

159 EXT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY 159

The rather splendid exterior of Mrs Castle's offices.

160 INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY 160

The undersecretaries are struggling with a sofa. They put it down, then straighten. They are sweating.

BARBARA CASTLE

There. Perfect...Actually...Maybe it was better where we had it before-

(The men exchange glances)

Oh...dizzy me.

The men stagger back with the sofa and she turns away. Up close we see she is nervous. She looks back-

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

Just the armchairs, then...

(she disappears from view)

And I want plenty of sherry.

161 OMITTED 161

162 OMITTED 162

163

EXT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

163

The girls walk towards St James's Square, followed by the press. A second crowd of photographers and a camera crew, already in-situ, rush forwards to envelop them. Behind, the press who have dogged them all day, also shove forwards and a scrum ensues. Before long, one or two of the girls look overwhelmed and panicky.

RITA

If you could just...can we get through
please-

(she, too, is struggling)
You're blockin' the way. You-

CONNIE (O.S.)

Make some room, for God's sake-

Rita stops. Looks across. Connie is coming towards her, shoving reporters aside.

RITA

Connie-

The door opens and an undersecretary steps out.

UNDERSECRETARY

Ladies. Good morning...Could you keep
back please, gentlemen-

He and a couple more of the staff shove the press back.

RITA

I...?

CONNIE

I'm sorry I'm late.

The two women stare, Rita's eyes fill. They embrace.

REPORTER (O.S.)
Rita! Rita! Can we have a final comment-

REPORTER TWO (O.S.)
Rita-

RITA
I-

All of the girls are through the cordon and the reporters are pushed back. But still they look formidable-

REPORTER TWO
Rita! Is equal pay really a possibility?

REPORTER THREE
What if Mrs Castle says no deal?

REPORTER
How will you cope?

RITA
Cope? How will we cope?

She is aware of Connie beside her. Eileen, Sandra and Brenda, too. Rita looks back to the reporter.

RITA (CONT'D)
 We're women. Now don't ask such stupid
 questions.

Rita turns to Connie and leads the girls back inside.

164

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

164

Mrs Castle checks the room; with sofas and armchairs arranged in a circle it now looks like a living room rather than a meeting place. She takes a deep breath and crosses to a large armoire at the back of the room. She opens it and selects a jacket from her closet. She plumps for something rather old. She looks at herself in the door mirror. Very sober. Then she checks shoes. The pair we've seen on several occasions are discarded and a plainer pair popped on. There is knock on the door. An under secretary comes in

UNDERSECRETARY
 Minister, there's a slight problem.

Mrs Castle turns to the secretary.

164A

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

164A

Mrs Castle walks into a smaller room. A man stands with his back to us. He turns, it's Tooley.

TOOLEY
 Mrs Castle.

BARBARA CASTLE
 Mr Tooley - I wasn't expecting you.

They shake hands.

TOOLEY
 But you are meeting the women?

BARBARA CASTLE
 I think it's time I listened to their argument. If you'd care to wait I'll inform you of any decisions we make.

She turns. Tooley watches her; his jaw suddenly tightens-

TOOLEY
 You know, we basically want the same thing, Mrs Castle...you and I-

She stops and turns

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

We want to see Ford Motors employing
British workers.

BARBARA CASTLE

Ford is a vital part of our economy, I'm
well aware of that-

TOOLEY

Then don't make us go elsewhere to build
our cars...

It wobbles her. He smiles.

TOOLEY (CONT'D)

If you don't help us hold the line here
and support us in our efforts to combat
the constant strikes which undermine our
ability to make cars at a profit...we
will take our factories elsewhere.

MRS CASTLE

Are you threatening me, Mr Tooley?

TOOLEY

I'm just trying to stop 40,000 people
from losing their jobs, Mrs Castle.
That's how many people we employ in this
country...Neither of us wanna take that
risk...surely?

She holds his gaze. Then she turns away.

164B INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

164B

Mrs Castle closes the door behind her and takes a deep
breath.

164C INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

164C

Brenda and Sandra look out of a window, pointing out the
sights. But they're nervous. As is Connie who glances to
the door. But Rita, who is beside her, sitting on a sofa,
can concentrate only on her friend. Finally-

RITA

Connie-

Connie turns. Rita speaks with a hushed voice. She
smiles. Then fudges it-

RITA (CONT'D)

Thanks for comin'.

Connie smiles. And Rita immediately leans closer in- **

RITA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry- **

CONNIE
No! Don't. It's me that needs to
apologise- **

(Rita frowns)
I loved George. More than anything. But
when it happened I felt guilty and I took
it out on you- **

(nods head)
But I am glad now, 'cause he ain't
sufferin' no more. And that's how he
would want me to feel. Which is why he
did it. **

(smiles, simply)
He was such a brave man, Rita. **

Rita is amazed but before she can react, the door is
opened and an undersecretary is there. **

UNDERSECRETARY
The Minister will see you now- **

The women all look at each other. **

165

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

165

They walk into the main office where Mrs Castle is
waiting in front of the grand fireplace.

RITA
Mrs Castle?

She turns and smiles

BARBARA CASTLE
I am...And you're Mrs O'Grady. I
recognise you from the news.

She crosses and they shake.

RITA
I'm pleased to meet you.

BARBARA CASTLE
And me, you.

Mrs Castle looks to the others.

RITA

Sorry. This is Connie, Brenda and Sandra.

BARBARA CASTLE

I'm delighted you could all come

They all nod. Mrs Castle's brain is racing.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

Please take a seat. Would you care for a sherry?

Mrs Castle, nods to a strategically placed undersecretary.

BRENDA

You ain't got whiskey, have you?

The girls look to Brenda thunderously.

165A

INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY

165A

Tooley is waiting still. He is brought a second cup of tea. He looks irritated.

UNDERSECRETARY

Sugar?

TOOLEY

No.

The undersecretary takes the empty and leaves the full cup. Tooley looks to the door. All alpha male

166 OMITTED

166 **

167 INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - AFTERNOON 167 **

Mrs Castle places her jacket on her chair. She's delaying. Then she turns to Rita who sits directly opposite, a small table between them.

BARBARA CASTLE

I've been following your dispute very closely. And I want to say how proud I am of the battle you've fought. I fully support the struggle for equal pay.

The girls look to each other, flushed with hope.

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

And you will have it...But in time.

RITA

What?

**

BARBARA CASTLE

Industry is going to object. The Lords'll kick up a fuss. The press'll have a field day...It isn't going to be easy-

**

**

**

RITA

What is, that's worth havin'?

Mrs Castle makes to retort then stops and considers the girls. This is difficult. But she drives on-

BARBARA CASTLE

Return to work, get back to your machines and then you have my word that I will push forward with your fight-

RITA

No!

The girls were all thinking it but Rita's vehemence still surprises.

BARBARA CASTLE

Mrs O'Grady-

RITA

That ain't good enough-

(Barbara makes to speak)

We want somethin' now! Somethin' solid-

MRS CASTLE

But-

RITA

You got the authority, you-
 (upset)
 We thought...seein' you, we'd-

**

MRS CASTLE

In politics you sometimes have to play
 the long game-

RITA

We ain't politicians! We're workin'
 women. And so are you!

Mrs Castle blinks. Rita too. A beat. Then Mrs Castle
 straightens.

**
**

BARBARA CASTLE

Very well. What would it take...? To get
 you back.

**
**
**

RITA

Excuse me?

**
**

BARBARA CASTLE

The something solid...And mark well, I
 say some thing, not everything.

**
**
**

RITA

We'd need...guarantee of an Equal Pay Act
 and...an immediate and...considerable
 movement towards the male rate at Ford.

**
**
**
**

Mrs Castle considers them. Her eyes narrow.

**

BARBARA CASTLE

Seventy five per cent?

**
**

RITA

Ninety.

**
**

Mrs Castle's eyes widen.

**

BARBARA CASTLE

You're putting me in a very difficult
 position...

**
**
**

167A INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES ANTE ROOM - DATA 167A **

Mrs Castle closes the door behind her. Her brain races.
 She turns to an undersecretary in the room.

**
**

BARBARA CASTLE

Get me the Prime Minister.

**
**

BARBARA CASTLE (CONT'D)

So, the question is...do you want to wait
until it *is* Law before you get your
machinists back to work, or do you want
to make a gesture now and see production
resume immediately?

**
**
**
**
**

Tooley stares at Mrs Castle. Endgame. Who will back down?

**

168 OMITTED

168

169 OMITTED

169 **

169A OMITTED

169A **

169B	OMITTED	169B	**
169C	OMITTED	169C	**
169D	EXT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY	169D	**
	Eileen, Monica and the other women wait patiently with their banners. Albert appears and dispenses beers.		**
169E	INT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - DAY	169E	**
	The women stare at empty glasses. Brenda takes a pull on her whiskey.		** **
	BRENDA I'm gonna miss all this.		** **
	The girls smile but they're so nervous. And then the door opens. All heads turn and Mrs Castle walks slowly into the room.		** ** **
	BARBARA CASTLE We have a deal.		** **
	CONNIE 90%?		** **
	Suddenly, Barbara looks uneasy. She shakes her head. The girls look worried.		** **
	BARBARA CASTLE 92...		** **
	Rita is stunned. She sees Mrs Castle's twinkling smile. And she, along with the girls, smiles.		** **
	RITA Thank you!		** **
	Mrs Castle grabs a glass and toasts with Rita. Brenda smiles and looks to Connie who is grinning, too.		** **

BLUE REVISIONS 24.06.09 112B

169E

169E **

170 EXT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - AFTERNOON 170 **

The women look tired as well as happy as they walk into the sunlight. Mrs Castle stops as they are greeted by camera flashes, and turns to Rita. **
**
**

BARBARA CASTLE

That's Biba... I saw it in a magazine-

Rita nods to Mrs Castle's outfit.

RITA

And that's C and A. I've got one at home... Seems we all dressed up... And you dressed down... Who did that put at an advantage do you think?

Mrs Castle laughs. **

RITA (CONT'D)

After you.

BARBARA CASTLE

Oh, no, young lady. After you. **

Mrs Castle indicates that Rita should step forward first. And Rita moves towards the crowd. **
**

171 EXT. BARBARA CASTLE'S WESTMINSTER OFFICES - AFTERNOON 171 **

Black and white TV footage. Mrs Castle stands with the girls. She clears her throat.

BARBARA CASTLE

Thank you...Thank you very much...I'm delighted to say that following our talks this afternoon, getting down to the nitty gritty, the 187 Ford machinists will be going back to work on the 1st of July. They will get an immediate pay rise of 7d an hour which will put them at 92% of the male rate. However, this is not an end to it. As a result of our discussion, I can announce that the government is fully committed to the creation of an Equal Pay Act and by the Autumn of this year, I guarantee appropriate legislation will be put into place to ensure that that act becomes law.

She steps back. Cameras flash and reporters call out. Rita breathes deeply, absorbing the scene.

She places her arms around Connie and with Sandra and Eileen and Brenda, they form up as a group. They all beam. SNAP. And the picture freezes.

THE STRIKE BY THE DAGENHAM SEWING MACHINISTS AND THE SUBSEQUENT SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATED THAT AFTERNOON WITH MRS BARBARA CASTLE DID INDEED LEAD TO THE INTRODUCTION OF AN EQUAL PAY ACT. IT BECAME LAW IN 1970. **

DISSOLVE TO:

172 EXT. FACTORY - DAY

172

The deserted factory. But then a bike comes over the hill. A single bike. A woman is on it. Then comes another and another. The women are leading the workforce back and soon the whole road is awash with bikes and people, all buffeted together, a vast sea of humanity, sweeping down the road, back to their jobs.

THE END