

STREET LIGHTS

VENDOR AND HOMELESSNESS NEWS

On a role

A vendor of *The Big Issue* in the North who joined other homeless people to act in a short film set on Manchester's streets has been signed up by an agent and hopes to win further acting roles.

Danny May, who has sold the magazine on and off for five years, plays Jack in *Humanitas*, a short film about life on the streets that was made after director Lauren Tomlinson ran a series of workshops for homeless people interested in acting.

The film was premiered at Cornerhouse. After the screening, May – who plays a homeless man hounded almost to the point of suicide by bullies until a stranger's act of kindness draws him back – and two other members of the cast gave impromptu talks to the audience about their lives and received a standing ovation.

He is now set to reverse the roles and play a bully in *Down Our Way*, a film made by local production company Grittish Films, and is lined up for another project with Tomlinson's voluntary group Acting On Impulse. And now he is on an agent's books, he hopes further acting roles will come his way.

"I loved it," said May of his experience making the film. After three months of workshops came three days of filming that included "lots of waiting around and lots of running".

May used to sell *The Big Issue* in the North outside Cornerhouse. "I used to long to go inside and watch a film one day. I never dreamed that when I did, I would be in it," he said.



Danny May, right, with fellow actor Simon Benjamin. Lauren Tomlinson (below) in a scene from the film she also directed

"The audience were very emotional afterwards. There were a few tears."

Last year Tomlinson, a trained actor, helped with a concert for homeless people in Manchester

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city centre. "I spent an evening listening to life stories and hearing about the boredom and aimlessness of life on the streets," she said. "Many folk expressed an interest in acting, so I came home and wrote a film script for them."

Tomlinson and a group of volunteers recruited for the workshops from the City Centre Ministries van that distributes food to homeless people in Store Street, behind Piccadilly Station.

"We had about 25 participants, with a core of 10 people who were cast as the main characters in the film.

"This has been an amazing journey for all of us.

"I have seen our actors grow in confidence, develop their imaginations and begin to work as a team. Visitors commented on the talent discovered in this group."

In March, Tomlinson brought together a professional crew and *Humanitas* was shot in Store Street and around the viaducts between Deansgate Locks and Whitworth Street West. Although working from the script, May and the other actors were able to improvise in some scenes where it improved the story.

Workshops for Acting On Impulse's next project begin in September and are open to anyone with experience of homelessness. Tomlinson will be promoting the workshops through posters on the City Centre Ministries van or can be contacted at actingonimpulsemal@googlemail.com.



**THE BIG
ISSUE
IN THE NORTH**

VENDOR CODE OF CONDUCT

All vendors selling *The Big Issue* in the North must abide by the Code of Conduct, the set of rules governing how they work. Outreach teams from *The Big Issue* in the North patrol the streets daily to check vendors' behaviour and to encourage and support them while working. Here are some of the key rules:

1. Vendors can only sell on designated pitches organised by *The Big Issue* in the North.
2. Vendors cannot sell between 8pm and 7am. Police officers have the authority to confiscate magazines and badges if they witness vendors selling during these hours.
3. Vendors must always wear their own badge when buying or selling the magazine and only sell magazines with their number on.
4. Vendors can only buy magazines for themselves.
5. Vendors must not use physical or verbal aggression towards members of the public or other vendors.
6. Vendors are not allowed to sell if staff feel they are unfit to do so.
7. Vendors must stand when selling; sitting down is an obstruction to the public highway and is illegal.
8. Vendors must not beg for money using the magazine. Asking for spare change or other items is considered to be begging.
9. Vendors can only charge £1.50 for each magazine and must always give the customer the magazine once paid for. Failing to do so is fraudulent and may result in police involvement.

To comment on vendor behaviour, please call...

Manchester: 0161 831 5570

Liverpool: 0151 702 6931

Leeds: 0113 243 9027

**GOOD HOMES, GOOD
JOBS, GOOD HEALTH,
GOOD LIFE**

The *Big Issue* in the North Trust raises funds to provide services for homeless vendors of this magazine.