

street life

VENDOR AND HOMELESSNESS NEWS

Homelessness film on track for debut

A vendor of The Big Issue in the North has picked up another film part

A film starring a vendor of The Big Issue in the North is to be premiered at Manchester's Cornerhouse cinema.

Under The Tracks, produced by Lauren Tomlinson, features actors who have experienced homelessness and whose real lives are reflected in the story.

It stars Danny May, who sells *The Big Issue in the North in Manchester*. May, after appearing in a previous film made by Tomlinson, went on to be picked up by an agent and has had a part in the Guy Ritchie film *Sherlock Holmes*, shot in Manchester recently.

Shot on location under Manchester's viaducts and at Cornerstone Day Centre, *Under*

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The Tracks is a docudrama telling the story of Joe, a gambling addict, whose stormy passage through life stops short when faced with a responsibility he didn't expect.

Tomlinson's first film featuring homeless actors, *Humanitas*, has



Scenes from *Under The Tracks*, featuring May in the red jacket

now been shown at two film festivals and is a contender for the human rights award at the Bang! short film festival in Nottingham in November, which recognises films that deal with a challenging subject matter in an innovative and inspirational way.

Tomlinson founded her film production company after getting to know homeless people who meet up at the food vans by Piccadilly Station in Manchester.

"As an actor, they inspired me to write a script for a short film,"

she said. "Then I realised that there was no one better to act in the film than these people themselves. So after five months of acting workshops we made *Humanitas* together. I was suddenly fast-tracked to becoming a producer and a director."

She described May and the other actors who have experienced homelessness as "amazing", adding: "They give us so much of themselves and have such raw energy and natural talent. As soon as the film was over, they wanted to get on with the next one."

Under The Tracks was directed by Garry Paton, who said: "It's been an honour to work with such a dedicated company of actors. Whatever's going on in their lives, they always turn up, even though several of them were homeless on and off during the workshops and film making."

Tomlinson said the film is "about what really happens on the streets. But the story behind its making is about what happens when people care enough to invest in you and believe in you."

***Under The Tracks* is at Cornerhouse, Manchester at 12am, 20 June.**

