

Television & radio

Last night on television **Anita Singh**

Our politicians need to see this heartbreaking film



Putting on a brave face: NJ and Courtney are living on the breadline

Eight-year-olds shouldn't have worries. Little ones, maybe: whether they'll remember all their lines for the school play, what will happen in the next chapter of *Harry Potter*. But Courtney, in **Growing Up Poor: Britain's Breadline Kids** (Channel 4), had many things to worry about. Universal Credit payments. Empty cupboards. Shaking out the pennies in a piggy bank to see if it held enough for a night's heating.

More than four million children in the UK are living in poverty, we were told. This heartbreaking edition of *Dispatches* from Bafta-winning director Jezza Neumann – returning to similar territory as his 2014 film of the same name – let them speak for themselves about what their lives are like.

Courtney's mother fled abuse and was rehoused by the council. But delays in the system meant she had to wait a month for her first Universal Credit payment, and the family were living on £5 a day for rent, food and bills. There was nothing to eat. As temperatures dipped below freezing, Courtney asked if they could have the heating on. "We'll just sleep with our coats on," her mother said. All this was happening in Cambridge, one of the richest cities in the country but also

one of the most unequal.

Through it all, Courtney maintained a cheery positivity that broke your heart. "I thought a food bank was where food comes out of a bank!" she laughed. As the programme wore on, it emerged that her mother suffered from a personality disorder and anxiety. She explained this to her daughter by drawing a graph of her mental state. It carried on along a straight line until the medication stopped. "Like a diving board," said Courtney. In the manner of eight-year-olds, she made up a story about being a superhero. But in this case, her powers would kick in if social services came to split the family: "If they ever take me off you I would grab on to you and not let go." And: "I want you to have a boyfriend. So we would have a daddy. If you're ill at least he could take us."

Courtney has become one of Britain's 700,000 young carers, keeping a wary eye on her mother's condition and taking responsibility for her five-year-old brother NJ. What a burden for a young child. By the end of the programme, her mother had moved the family to Hull, where they knew no one but accommodation was more affordable.

Was this a film about poverty, or about children coping with the mental health problems of their parents? There are links between the two, of

course, but the documentary did not explore them. In Sudbury, poverty was making the lives of Danielle and Phoenix hard. Their parents had split after 11 years of marriage and Danielle lived with her mother in a cramped bedsit, which meant studying for her GCSEs was all but impossible. Younger brother Phoenix chose to live with his father, "otherwise he would be alone". They shared a bedroom: "It's not the best but as long as I've got a roof over my head," Phoenix shrugged.

But the greater issue here was that both parents had mental health difficulties, which in the father's case had seen him admitted to hospital and suicidal. He self-harmed, showing us pictures of his arms riddled with 30 cigarette burns. Danielle was struggling herself, and also self-harming. It was a complex picture that went beyond the "breadline kids" title. Was it ethically sound to show children in such a vulnerable state due, at least in part, to their parents' mental health crises?

In some cases, one life event can tip a family over the edge. Nine-year-old Rose's sister had died after a long battle with cancer. Her mother had left work to care for her terminally ill child, and fallen behind on bills. The funeral costs were the straw that broke the camel's back. Rose's mother works part-time but the failings of the Universal Credit system mean that the more overtime she does, the more steeply her benefits are cut until she ends up worse off. The family relied on a food club that distributes near-expiry date supermarket goods.

The programme left me hoping against hope that these young kids, not yet ground down by life, will somehow be OK. Rose's cousin closed the programme by saying: "I want people with more money to understand what it's like with less money." The documentary achieved that. On the back of a trailer featuring Courtney's story, a crowdfunding has already been set up for the family. But other than a short-lived burst of sympathy, what do programmes like this really achieve? It is politicians who need to act on child poverty, not kind-hearted viewers.

Growing Up Poor: Britain's Breadline Kids ★★★

What to watch

The Family Secret

CHANNEL 4, 9.00PM

Regular Emmy- and Bafta-winning production company True Vision (*China's Stolen Children* and last night's *Britain's Breadline Kids*, see review, left) have produced what sounds like another awards contender in this intriguing, groundbreaking one-off documentary. *The Family Secret* brings cameras into a restorative-justice conference between a woman, known only as Kath, who has spoken out about the rape and sexual abuse she suffered as a child over 20 years ago, and the perpetrator – a close relative. The conference itself runs for the hour, interspersed with insights from the victim and her family members; with no editorial voice included. The viewer must make up their own mind.

In theory, the victim gets the opportunity to ask questions and try to attain something like closure, while the abuser is forced to reckon with the impact of their actions, and demonstrate their remorse. While ongoing legal issues meant that previews were not available, expect a story of memory, perception



Dark deeds: rape victim Kath, when she was a child

and the different ways in which the same event can be recalled, as well as a harrowing portrait of a

family dealing with the guilt, shame, anger and stigmas around the revelations. *Gabriel Tate*

Arts

Landscape Artist of the Year

SKY ARTS/NOW TV, 7.00PM

This may be a somewhat gentler and slightly less intellectually challenging art awards ceremony than tonight's Turner Prize (see below). Stephen Mangan and Joan Bakewell watch while the final three artists take on a landscape challenge in a bid to win the top prize of a £10,000 commission. *GT*

The Turner Prize 2019

BBC FOUR, 11.00PM

The winner of the 36th Turner Prize is announced



Turner Prize: Abu Hamdan

live from Dreamland Margate. The shortlist this year includes audio artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan, mixed-media artist Helen Cammock, painter Oscar Murillo, and performance artist and sculptress Tai Shani. *GT*

Documentary

Takaya: Lone Wolf

BBC FOUR, 9.00PM

Wildlife photographer Cheryl Alexander presents this gripping documentary that examines why Takaya, a wolf – and thus normally a highly social animal – would appear on its own in an island community off the coast of British Columbia. *GT*

Claudia Lawrence: Missing or Murdered?

CHANNEL 5, 9.15PM

The chef Claudia Lawrence was 35 when she disappeared in 2009, and she has never been

found. This programme scrutinises a number of different theories regarding what might have happened to her – including sex trafficking – and it also examines the impact of media coverage on the investigation. *GT*

Drama

Gold Digger

BBC ONE, 9.00PM

There are further unsavoury insights into the life of Ted (Alex Jennings) tonight, as he takes the news of Julia's (Julia Ormond) engagement very badly indeed, with his new partner Marsha (Nikki Amuka-Bird) and his children becoming the focus of his frustration. *GT*

Factual

How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield

ITV, 8.00PM; STV, 11.15PM

The money-saving series are out in droves for Christmas, and this



Takaya: Lone Wolf

instalment is for parents: which toys are likely to be included in children's wishlists this year? Expect "interactive animals" (think live-action Tamagotchis), board games and a special appearance from Rebekah Vardy. *GT*

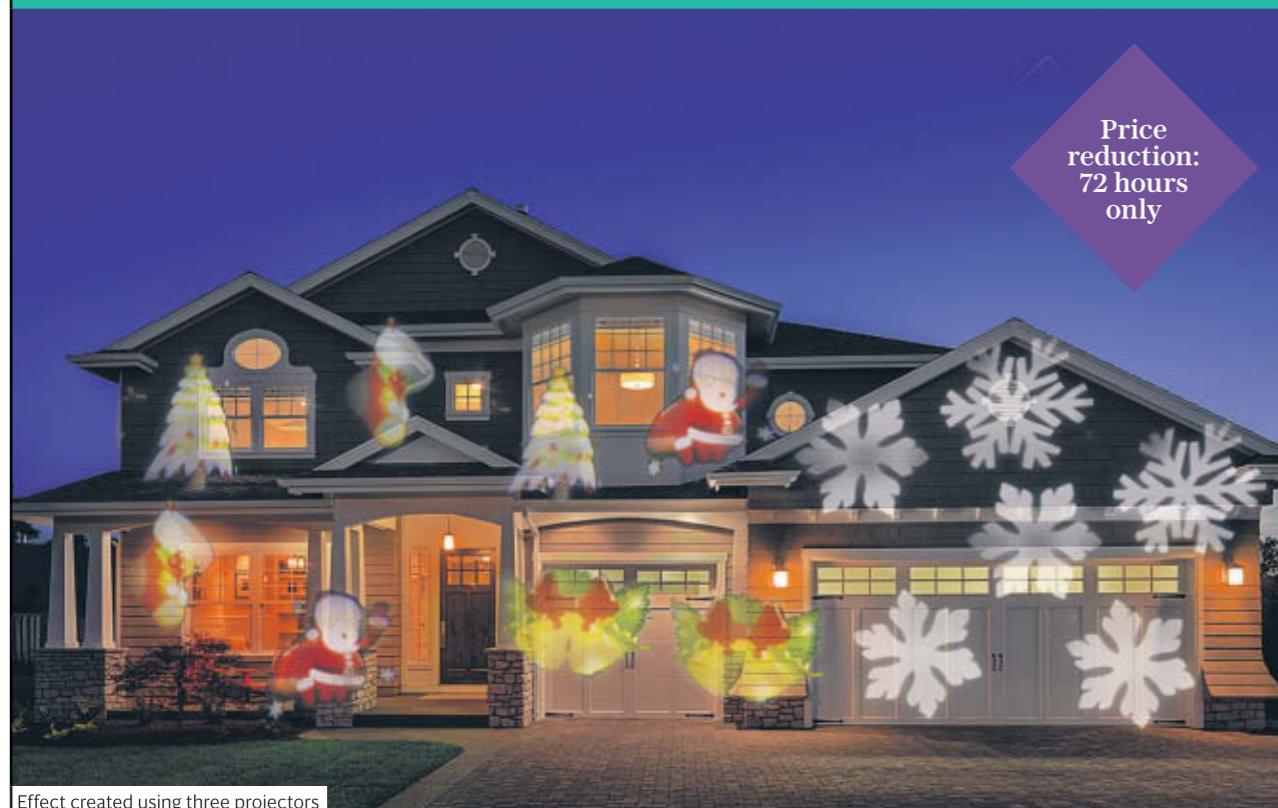
How to Save £1000 Online

CHANNEL 4, 8.00PM

Sabrina Grant and Helen Skelton explain how to save money on buying plane tickets and clothes, and provide useful tips about how haggling online can pay even greater dividends than doing it face to face. *GT*

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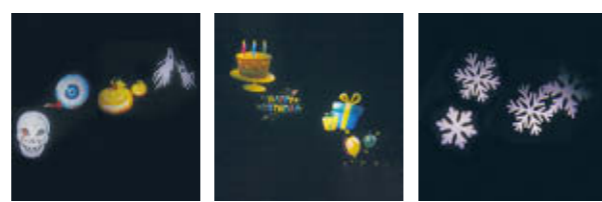
• Simply place the projector in the ground using the mounting spike, plug it in and let it do the rest. The projector includes six eye-catching designs for a range of occasions, each with four different slides.

• The themed slides include: Christmas – featuring Santa, Christmas tree, stocking and bells; Halloween – featuring a skull, ghost, pumpkin and eye ball; birthday – featuring a cake, presents, balloons and "happy birthday"; snowflakes – with four differently styled snowflakes; hearts – with one red, one blue, one white and one green heart; stars – with groups of red, white and blue stars.

• The slides spin around, giving an amazing 3D effect on almost any surface including walls, doors, windows, and even trees and lawns. This light can also be used indoors, projecting lights across walls and doors – perfect for parties and discos.

• Measures: L29.5 x W8.5 x H11cm. Power cord length: 104cm.

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There's nothing general about our election coverage

Radio choice **Charlotte Runcie**

More or Less Election Special

RADIO 4, 9.00AM

Tim Harford is doing some of the best public-interest journalism at the BBC, just quietly plugging away at *More or Less*, explaining the often unintuitive nature of statistics and figures to

those of us whose eyes and ears tend to glaze over at the mere prospect. In this morning's first of two parts, Harford is on an election footing, and frankly he couldn't be more needed: he takes an analytical, calm and rational, at the statistical claims made by all the political parties in their attempts to win our votes.

Radio 1

FM 97.6-99.8MHz

6.30am The Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Greg James 10.00 Clara Amfo 12.45pm Newsbeat 1.00 Scott Mills 4.00 Nick Grimshaw 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Nick Grimshaw 7.00 Radio 1's Future Sounds with Annie Mac 9.00 Rickie, Melvin and Charlie 11.00 Radio 1's Indie Show with Jack Saunders 1.00am Annie Nightingale 3.00 RuPaul's Drag Race UK: The Podcast 3.40 Radio 1 and iXtra Stories 4.00 - 6.30am Early Breakfast with Katie Thistleton

Radio 2

FM 88-90.2MHz

6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jeremy Vine 2.00pm Steve Wright in the Afternoon 5.00 Sara Cox 7.00 Jo Whaley. Music and chat 9.00 The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum. The world of jazz 10.00 Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation 12.00 OJ Borg 3.00am Sounds of the 80s with Gary Davies 4.50 Radio 2 Sounds of the 80s Mastermix 5.00 - 6.30am Vanessa Feltz

Radio 3

FM 90.2-92.4MHz

6.30am Breakfast 9.00 Essential Classics 12.00 Composer of the Week: Janacek 1.00pm News 1.02 Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert 2.00 Afternoon Concert 5.00 In Tune 7.00 In Tune Mixtape. Featuring Bella Hardy's The Drunken Butcher Of Tideswell 7.30 Radio 3 in Concert. The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra perform a one-hour version of Wagner's Ring Cycle 10.00 Free Thinking. Visions of the

future conjured up by artists Nam June Paik and John Giorno 10.45 The Way I See It. Civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson discusses The Migration Series by Jacob Lawrence 11.00 Night Tracks 12.30am - 6.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz; LW 198kHz

6.00am Today 9.00 ♦ More or Less Election Special. See Radio choice 9.30 Naturebang 9.45 Book of the Week: Stalingrad: Destiny of a Novel 9.45 LW: Daily Service 10.00 Woman's Hour 11.00 Sultans of Swing 11.30 Art of Now: Innervisions 12.00 News 12.01pm LW: Shipping Forecast 12.04 Grandmothers 12.18 Call You and Yours 12.57 Weather 1.00 The World at One 2.00 The Archers 2.15 Drama: Massachusetts Avenue 3.00 Short Cuts 3.30 Costing the Earth 4.00 Power Lines 4.30 Great Lives. New series 5.00 PM. With Evan Davis 5.54 LW: Shipping Forecast 5.57 Weather 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Tom Wrigglesworth's Hang-Ups. Dad attempts to take centre stage. Last in the series 7.00 The Archers. Brian takes a risk 7.15 Front Row. Arts programme 7.45 Middlemarch. Katie Fitts' adaptation of George Eliot's classic novel 8.00 The Boy in the Video 8.40 In Touch 9.00 All in the Mind 9.30 More or Less Election Special 10.00 The World Tonight 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Grandmothers 11.00 Michael Frayn's Pocket Playhouse 11.30 The Untold 12.00 News and Weather 12.30am Book of the Week: Stalingrad: Destiny of a Novel 12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service 5.20 Shipping Forecast 5.30 News Briefing 5.43 Prayer for the Day

The Documentary

WORLD SERVICE, 1.30PM

In 1969, as the Vietnam War raged, John Lennon and Yoko Ono staged the "Bed-In for Peace" in Amsterdam and Montreal. Francine Jones was then a young attaché at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, and 50 years on

she returns to the bedroom suite and reunites with others who remember the event. Contributors include Petula Clark, who relates her role in the bed-in, and then-20-year-old Allan Rock, who met Lennon and Ono and ended up driving them around Ottawa, singing Beatles songs as they went.

5.45 Farming Today 5.58 - 6.00am Tweet of the Day

Radio 5 Live

MW 693 & 909kHz

6.00am 5 Live Breakfast 9.00 Your Call 10.00 The Emma Barnett Show 1.00pm Nihal Arthanayake 4.00 5 Live Drive 7.00 5 Live Sport: Premier League Football 2019-20 7.30 5 Live Sport: Premier League Football 2019-20 10.30 Sarah Brett 1.00am Up All Night 5.00 Morning Reports 5.15 - 6.00am Wake up to Money

Classic FM

FM 99.9-101.9MHz

6.00am More Music Breakfast 9.00 John Suetet 1.00pm Anne-Marie Minhall 5.00 Classic FM Drive 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. Relaxing sounds 8.00 The Full Works Concert. Pieces by Haydn, Wagner, Field and Holst 10.00 Smooth Classics 1.00am - 6.00am Sam Pittis

World Service

DIGITAL ONLY

6.00am Newsday 8.30 Business Daily 8.50 Witness History 9.00 News 9.06 The Arts Hour 10.00 World Update 11.00 The Newsroom 11.30 In the Studio 12.00 News 12.06pm Outlook 1.00 The Newsroom 1.30 ♦ The Documentary. See Radio choice 2.00 Newshour 3.00 News 3.06 People Fixing The World 3.30 World Business Report 4.00 BBC OS 6.00 News 6.06 Outlook 7.06 The Newsroom 7.30 Sport Today 8.00 News 8.06 People Fixing The World 8.30 Digital Planet 9.00 Newshour 10.00 News 10.06 The Newsroom 10.20 Sports News

10.30 World Business Report 11.00 News 11.06 The Documentary 11.30 In the Studio 12.00 News 12.06am The Arts Hour 1.00 News 1.06 Business Matters 2.00 News 2.06 The Newsroom 2.30 The Documentary 3.00 News 3.06 HARDtalk 3.30 The Compass 4.00 News 4.06 Newsday 5.00 News 5.06 The Newsroom 5.30 - 6.00am Digital Planet

Radio 4 Extra

DIGITAL ONLY

6.00am Whose Body? 6.30 Was Gertrude Stein Any Good? 7.00 Four Joneses and a Jenkins 7.30 Tom Wrigglesworth's Hang-Ups 8.00 The Goon Show 8.30 Round the Horne 9.00 The Now Show 9.30 Beachcomber - By the Way 10.00 Lost Horizon 11.00 Telling Tales 12.00 The Goon Show 12.30pm Round the Horne 1.00 Whose Body? 1.30 Was Gertrude Stein Any Good? 2.00 A Gathering Light 2.15 A History of Britain in Numbers 2.30 A House to Let 2.45 Shop Girl 3.00 Lost Horizon 4.00 The Unbelievable Truth 4.30 Kalangadog Junction 5.00 Four Joneses and a Jenkins 5.30 Tom Wrigglesworth's Hang-Ups 6.00 Ice 6.30 Sounds Natural 7.00 The Goon Show 7.30 Round the Horne 8.00 New Creative Dramas 8.30 Was Gertrude Stein Any Good? 9.00 Telling Tales 10.00 Comedy Club 12.00 Ice 12.30am Sounds Natural 1.00 Whose Body? 1.30 Was Gertrude Stein Any Good? 2.00 A Gathering Light 2.15 A History of Britain in Numbers 2.30 A House to Let 2.45 Shop Girl 3.00 Lost Horizon 4.00 The Unbelievable Truth 4.30 Kalangadog Junction 5.00 Four Joneses and a Jenkins 5.30 - 6.00am Tom Wrigglesworth's Hang-Ups