

LONDON ON SCREEN

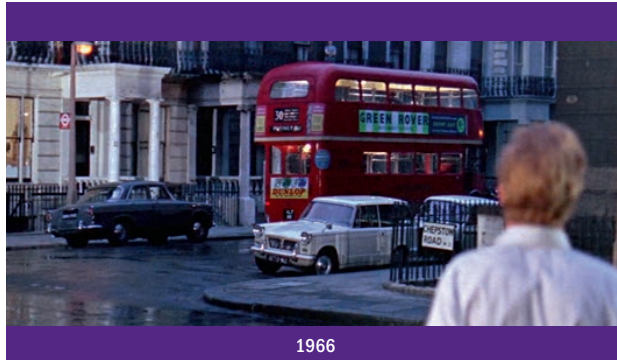
The Notting Hill pad in 'Alfie'

The location 29 St Stephen's Gardens, W2.

The scene Love rat Alfie (Michael Caine) stomps home from the pub and lets his girlfriend Annie (Jane Asher) know he doesn't like the steak-and-kidney pie she just prepared. 'Where's the Spam?' he barks, hurling it at the wall. Annie runs out of Alfie's dingy flat and life.

Then One of London's earliest Victorian squares, St Stephen's Gardens once boasted a flower garden for its rich residents to relax in. However, by the time 'Alfie' was filmed there, it had been tarmacked over. 'The area had been in decline for decades,' explains architectural historian Edmund Bird, something he attributes to the expansion of the 'noisy and dirty' Great Western Railway in the latter half of the nineteenth century. St Stephen's Gardens was grotty and unfashionable, making it the perfect home for a leech like Alfie.

Now Half a century on and it's a desirable address once again, with the gardens fully restored. 'The wheel of fortune has turned full circle,' says Bird. According to Zoopla, a two-bedroom flat there currently goes for around £1.5 million. Just watch out for pie stains on the wall. ■ *Thomas Hobbs*



1966



2020

When Lambs Become Lions



WHAT IS IT...

A complex look at both sides of the Kenyan ivory trade.

WHY GO...

For the hard-hitting storytelling (and the baby zebra).

→ Director Jon Kasbe (12)
76 mins.

THIS INVOLVING DOCUMENTARY about poaching in Kenya opens with an ominous shot of smoky flames reaching skywards across an African plain. Powerful and provocative, it hints at the environmental themes of a film that never settles for easy moral judgements.

Our two protagonists are X, a cocky ivory dealer, and Asan, a young wildlife ranger who loves his badly paid job but finds himself in trouble with his pregnant wife when the government falls behind with his wages. The wrinkle? The men are cousins. If Asan catches X killing an elephant, he will have to shoot him (and presumably have some explaining to do back home).

It's a thorny moral scenario that director Jon Kasbe blurs further by showing these two men united by a common goal: to do whatever they can to support their young families. As time passes and money becomes scarcer, the choices they make bring them closer and closer together.

Kasbe spent four dangerous years making 'When Lambs Become Lions' and he has been rewarded with some thrilling moments. His cameras take in an elephant hunt with poachers and they are smuggled into cars to catch nocturnal deals with ivory buyers. The revelations and dramatic fireworks that ensue are startling to witness. Taking those risks has paid off in a doc that feels more like a thriller. And the twist at the end is a doozy. ■ *Greer McNally*



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