



Bust, BBC1

## Inside The Box What Keith Watson Saw Last Night

When you have to step over a homeless person in a shop doorway, do you wonder about the twists of fate that brought them there? Does it ever occur to you that it could be you? Probably not. It's the kind of thing that only happens to other people.

Going broke is usually the stage you go through before you hit the streets. Which is why **Bust** (BBC1) was the kind of film to stop you in your tracks: the people hitting the financial skids weren't some curious, unfamiliar breed, they were people you could pass on any street, in any town. They'd just made the wrong choices at the wrong time.

**Bust** wasn't a political polemic railing against the iniquities of society's cock-eyed distribution of wealth. It was simply three life stories which revealed the reality behind glib talk of economic downturns and credit crunches. It showed the human face of debt. The people in **Bust** hadn't come a cropper because of crazy spending sprees, they'd simply bought into the idea of paying by credit as a way of life, encouraged by propaganda promoting a bottomless pit of borrowing.

Michael, a former chef with heart problems, had a stark choice: the escalating cost of electricity meant he had to choose between keeping his breathing machines pumping or keeping back money for food. Tracy knew selling her house to pay debts could split up her family – by the end her family of five was scattered between various friends' floors. Single mother Maria struggled to understand where it had gone wrong. All ended up in bankruptcy court.

The hard-hearted could have condemned them as fools for buying into the credit dream. But their struggles had a there-but-for-the-grace-of-God quality you couldn't escape. And bankruptcy wasn't the cure-all Michael hoped: 'I thought it was like magic. I thought it would all go away. But the bills keep coming in.' Thousands more will be repeating the story.

It seems fair to expect nurses to have some kind of grip on nutrition, which made **Supersize vs Superskinny** (C4) a bit of a worry. On one scale-busting side you had strapping Yorkshire lass Phillippa, tipping the scales at nearly 26st, while her diet-swap partner was tiny Gillian, who lived almost exclusively on Diet Coke and whose calcium-deprived hips poked through her skin like coat hangers. And these two were supposed to be looking after people?

As is the way with these magic wand shows, all it seemed to take were a few stiff words from super-shiny Dr Christian Jessen along the lines of 'you'll die if you don't change your ways' and years of food abuse simply melted away. They should make humiliation on TV available on the NHS.



Supersize vs Superskinny, C4