

THE TIMES

Growing Up Poor

BBC Three

★★★★☆

The nonsense of dividing Britain into strivers and slackers was the unstated theme of the second part of **Growing Up Poor**, which turned its attention to “lads”. Dave Foulkes’ excellent, unflinching film picked on three young men in their late teens who strove to get anywhere, slow or fast. Craig was desperate not to go on the dole like his dad, (he was “a bum”) but with literally nothing to eat and no work to be got was forced to. Frankie also wanted to improve on the past, in his case his own as a convicted mugger, but an open day at a university proved more alienating than inspiring. Then there was Wes, desperate to be the father to his son that his father never was to him. Wes’s story pointed to the irony in the programme’s title. Hanging about with younger kids on street corners, sofa-surfing, sporting SpongeBob socks, Wesley, as his girlfriend knew, wasn’t growing up at all. You need a job to do that.

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