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British Legend Ken Loach to take his last movie, The Old Oak to Cannes

By [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#)

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86-year-old British filmmaker Ken Loach is gearing up for the screening of his film The Old Oak at Cannes. Will he win the Palm d'Or this time?

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The Old Oak will be screened at Cannes 2023.

The legendary British director, Ken Loach, will take his last film, The Old Oak, to the Cannes Film Festival, which begins on May 16. At 86, he is more or less sure that this will be his swan song. With a fading eye sight and short-term memory, maybe this is it. But one never knows, how passion plays out, and for men like Loach, cinema is much more than mere passion. Also read: Cannes Film Festival to honour Michael Douglas with honorary Palme d'Or

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The Old Oak unfolds during the June 2022 railway workers strike, and refugees from Ukraine are pouring into Britain. They are crossing the English Channel, despite the warning from the UK administration that they would be deported to Rwanda. Loach and his old associates writer Paul Laverty and producer Rebecca O'Brien have been bang on with the time.

The plot is layered and centres on a mining town where pits have been in disuse for a long time. Shops are closed, there is no money, but there is a pub, Old Oak, run by a man who was once a miner. He is Ballantyne, essayed by Dave Turner. Even this is tottering, but somehow manages to stay open, thanks to some regulars - disgruntled men.

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It is into this deserted, almost ghostly town that a group of+ Syrian refugees lands. Part of this group is a young woman, Yara (portrayed by Syrian actress Ebla Mari); she is confident, as confident as how her pictures that she shoots with her camera will come out. She likes to record what her eyes observe. The locals are not very pleased with this. The feel that the refugees have been dumped on them.

If the pub is serving its last orders, Loach is on to his last movie. The parallel is unmistakable. Sad though, for what a brilliant auteur he has been.

Interestingly, a career in cinema was not Loach's early idea. He recently told Variety: "I quite fancied the law, having no lawyer friends or relatives, but having read the biographies of the Edwardian barristers and advocates Marshall Hall and Norman Birkett, and thought 'ah, that's the life for me'. I got into university [St Peter's College, Oxford] and even started eating

Indeed, many of his films are theatrical. Works like Hidden Agenda (1990) tackling the political upheaval in Ireland, Land and Freedom (1995) about the Republican resistance during the Spanish Civil War and Carla's Song (1996), set in Nicaragua are classic examples. In 2006, Loach won the Palm d'Or for The Wind That Shakes The Barley. A haunting film about the Irish Civil War, and he gave us brilliant characterisations. Later, he helmed Bread and Roses (2000) about the janitors' strike in New York. "We want bread, but we also want roses", the protestors shouted. His 2010 Route Irish was set during the Iraq occupation. Most of his movies were deeply political, but he did dabble in personal relationships, like in Ae Fond Kiss. His 1998 My Name Is Joe explores man's struggle to stay sober.

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The Old Oak is the third in a series of movies made by Loach in the north-east, following I, Daniel Blake (2016) and Sorry We Missed You (2019). "There was a sense of completing a little sequence of films because the first two had been so tragic in a way – tragic is perhaps too grand a word – but we had seen really bad things happen in the benefits system and the gig economy and the new area of exploitation. One of the poorest areas in the country accepting more than its fair share of Syrian refugees crystallised so much," Loach added.

The question now is, will Loach win the Palm d'Or this time?

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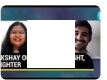
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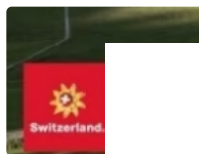
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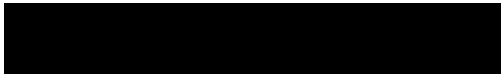
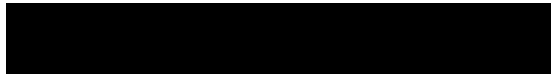
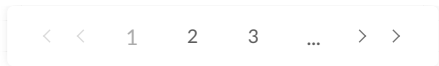
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