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What's on TV tonight: The Hunt for Britain's Sex Gangs and Eddie Izzard's Mandela Marathons

Our pick of the best shows on the box for Thursday, May 23 - plus our at a glance soaps round-up



The Hunt for Britain's Sex Gangs

The Hunt for Britain's Sex Gangs (Channel 4, 9pm)

With the conviction last week of seven men in Oxford for running a child sex abuse ring, this harrowing Dispatches film about a similar, earlier case in Telford, Shropshire couldn't be more timely.

Three years ago, Telford police granted the Dispatches crew unprecedented access to Operation Chalice – one of the biggest child sex abuse cases in the UK.

The film, which includes gruelling first hand accounts from victims, and parents as well as the dawn raids and the police interviews with the accused, unravels the evil and shocking extent of child grooming carried out by these gangs.

The investigation encompassed over 100 victims, some as young as 11 who were abused by a network of around 200 men.

And once the police had got their heads around the still hard to believe fact that something of this scale could actually go on, and worked out how best to tackle it, this film also shows very clearly how the lumbering legal system is ill-equipped to protect the victims.

Perhaps the worst insult is that having been gang-raped by a series of men, the girls were subjected to a similar ordeal in court when seven barristers all took their turn to accuse them of lying.

Directed by documentary maker Anna Hall, who first learned about this phenomenon of predominantly Pakistani men grooming white schoolgirls 17 years ago, *The Hunt for Britain's Sex Gangs* is her third film for Channel 4 on the subject.



Amelia Bullmore as DCI Gill Murray, Suranne Jones as DC Rachel Bailey and Lesley Sharp as DC Janet Scott in *Scott & Bailey*

Scott & Bailey (ITV1, 9pm)

The second *Scott & Bailey* episode of the week brings the third series to a nerve-shredding finish. As DCI Gill Murray (Amelia Bullmore) stocks up on booze for her son Sammy's engagement party, she's being stalked and soon finds herself held at knifepoint on the highway to hell, or as it's more commonly called, the M62 eastbound.

As the troops organise themselves into a rescue mission, Janet and Rachel are still very pointedly not speaking to each other after their massive falling out yesterday. And as

fears for Gill's safety grow, the only silver lining to this particularly dark cloud is that being forced to work together might just thaw the frosty atmosphere hanging between them.

There's no word yet on whether ITV will commission a fourth series of Sally Wainwright's drama. But if there is, we'll definitely need Gill to come out of tonight's finale in one piece. Scott & Bailey wouldn't be the same without her.



Eddie Izzard

Eddie Izzard's Mandela Marathons (9pm, Sky1)

I'm sure I'm not the only person who was inspired by Eddie Izzard's 43 marathons in 51 days for Sport Relief.

Just over a month ago I completed my very first marathon to find out whether it really was possible that a non-runner, after virtually no-training (too dull) could run (or, more accurately, jog) for 26.2 miles on persistence and body-fat alone.

I found out it was. But what I can't understand is how he got up the next morning and ran another one when I couldn't even walk upstairs.

Last year, to commemorate Nelson Mandela's 27 years of imprisonment, Eddie flew to South Africa where he attempted 27 marathons in 27 days. This film weaves excerpts from Eddie's stand-up shows and Mandela's life story into his run.

SOAP ROUND-UP

Emmerdale (7pm and 8pm, ITV1)

Moving a rotting, stinking corpse and then re-burying it somewhere else, isn't as much fun as it sounds and tonight Cameron must be heartily wishing he'd never murdered Alex in the first place.

But as Chas and Gennie, right, suspect him of all sorts when he fails to show up at the charity fundraiser he organised, Cameron's not out of the woods yet. In fact, he's about to drive straight into a tree. On purpose.

Eastenders (BBC1, 7.30pm)

In tonight's baby news: Alice takes Scarlett to "the park" (actually just a tree, a bench and an ice-cream stall) so Michael can play with his daughter.

Kirsty is still not pregnant, but more importantly, today is the day when Lola, right, will hopefully get baby Lexi back and this whole shame-making storyline can finally be put to bed once and for all.

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