

## Document Citation

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*The Legacy of Alan Clarke*

**SCUM**

THE FILM CENTER AT

CHICAGO A.I.

JAN '94

THE FILM CENTER GAZETTE—PAGE 5

1977, Alan Clarke, United Kingdom,  
67 min.

With Ray Winston, David Threlfall

**6:00**

Roy Minton's controversial television play SCUM, about life in a borstal (a juvenile correction center/prison), was commissioned by the BBC, filmed by Alan Clarke, advertised, then suddenly removed from the screening schedule a short time before it was due to air. The BBC brass labeled it "one compendium of incident and violence" and shelved it permanently. Clarke felt the film's implicit criticism of the brutal way prison officers behaved towards the boys resulted in the ban. "The borstal doesn't work," he said, "and it's something society needs to talk about." Refusing to be silenced, Clarke and Minton joined forces to create a theatrical version of SCUM which was seen widely at home and abroad. This BBC version, however, was not broadcast until 1990. It illustrates the manner in which the system corrupts those it is supposed to save. Ray Winston, one of the stars of QUADROPHENIA, plays Carlin, a young offender pegged as a "hard case" by the administration. His reputation makes him a target for both the "screws" (as the borstal warders are called) and the inmate leaders who fear a challenge to their hierarchy. After a series of attacks on him, Carlin decides to beat the system at his own game and take over as the prison "Daddy." (AS)