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# Ghett'a Life Directed by Chris Browne

REVIEWS | DVD | MAR 15 2013



By Scott A. Gray

3 So, this is what happens when you mix *City of God* with *Gladiator* (the 1992 boxing movie with Cuba Gooding Jr., not the massively overrated Ridley Scott flick where Russell Crowe gets weepy in a wheat field). That's not to say that the unfortunately named *Ghett'a Life* is as visceral and insightful as the former or as unintentionally hokey as the later, but it's a well-meaning but uncomfortable union of the gritty, urban political "issues" film and the inspirational sports drama. Moderately experienced second unit cameraman Chris Browne is obviously very passionate about the project, but passion can't keep this movie afloat under the weight of all its pandering clichés and flat characters. This heavily didactic story concerns the garrison communities of Kingston, Jamaica, where political lines are starkly drawn and policed by sanctioned gangsters. For viewers unfamiliar with this highly corrupt system, it's spelled out, complete with dictionary definitions, in the opening scene. With election time looming, Lenford (a community activist) is nominated to run for a local council position. Having recently lost his oldest son to gang violence, he's campaigning for a ceasefire. His pacifist position and inflexible political ideals create a lot of tension between him and his son, Derrick, who wants nothing more than to be the next Lennox Lewis (who serves as one of the film's producers). After a few early conflicts with a group of young gangbangers from the other side of the fence, Derrick ends up joining a boxing gym in the forbidden zone and learns that people can be kind, or pricks, no matter their political affiliation; it's the garrison leaders, or "dons," profiting from all the civil unrest, that are the real enemy. Spoken in a mix of Jamaican English and patois, depending on the speaker's general level of education and degree of emotional stability (Lenford dips into some thick Creole when he's pissed off), all of the talking is subtitled for clarity's sake. Beneath the training montages, clichéd life lessons, cheesy inspirational music cues and genre tropes are a heap of good intentions and a few insights into a very warped system, but that's not enough to warrant a recommendation. The supplemental material is limited to a reasonably informative "Making Of," a superfluous "teaser" and the trailer that helped secure the film the funding required to get it made in the first place. (MVD)



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**Life of Pi [Blu-Ray]** Directed by Ang Lee

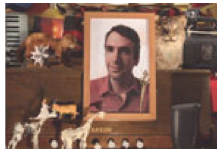


**Les Misérables [Blu-Ray]** Directed by Tom Hooper

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