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All Jamaican-made 'Ghett'a Life' premieres at Carib

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'Ghett'a Life' cast members Kadeem Wilson (left) and Carl Davis (centre) speak with writer/director/producer Chris Browne on the black carpet outside the Carib 5 cinema in Cross Roads, St Andrew, ahead of Wednesday night's world premiere, screened in two of the complex's five auditoriums. - Photo by Mel Cooke

Mel Cooke, Gleaner Writer

In his recorded message at the beginning of Wednesday night's premiere of Ghett'a Life, writer/director/producer Chris Browne spoke to the teamwork involved in making the film.

"This is a collaborative art form. It takes many people to make a film," he said.

Browne thanked associate line producer Natalie Thompson, the editing team headed by Joel Burke, co-producer Justine Henzell and director of photography Bobby Bukowski, among others.

Browne also thanked the residents of the communities where filming took place for **Ghett'a Life** - a story in which one young man's boxing prowess becomes the thin edge of the wedge in rebellion against a heavy-handed don and a rallying point for a community called Jungle, which is divided across political lines.

The communities include Rose Town, Allman Town, Grants Pen, Mountain View and Southside.

Great multitude

The magnitude of the premiere was underscored by not only the black carpet treatment outside the Cross Roads, [St Andrew](#), Carib 5, but also the number of persons who turned out, requiring the use of two [auditoriums](#). Faux boxers, robed in red and blue, helped set the atmosphere outside the cinema and, in the lobby, Guinness ladies appropriately stacked for the all-important around the ring trot - holding up numbers between rounds at a boxing match - helped slake thirst.

There was heartfelt applause when, at the end of his 'thank yous', Browne urged "our Government to support our industry".

[Private investors](#) Maurice Facey and Tony Hart are listed as [executive producers](#) of **Ghett'a Life** and Facey had the first recorded word after the National Anthem.

He wryly made the point that funding film is a new venture for him, at a point when "I used to say I have done it all". He noted that film has been somewhat treated as the "Cinderella" of the Jamaican creative industries, while Film Commissioner Kim Marie Spence said "**Ghett'a Life** is a first; a fully financed Jamaican film".

She said it was filmed in Jamaica and is "about [Jamaica](#), using Jamaican talent, in front and behind the camera".

In front of the camera are Carl Davis (councillor-hopeful Lenford), Karen Robinson (Lenford's wife Dawn), Kevoy Burton (the couple's son and lead character Derrick), Christopher McFarlane (Don Sin), Winston 'Bello' Bell (coach Manuel), Lisa Williams (Manuel's granddaughter Camella), Odane Oliver (Derrick's friend Big Toe), Kadeem Wilson (Gully Rat), Teddy Price (Bruising Gym owner/manager Jingles) and Lenford Salmon (MP Hewlett).

Donovan Perkins, president and CEO of Pan Caribbean Financial Services, also had a message before the start of **Ghett'a Life**.

And at the end, after the fists and bullets had settled and the opposing green and orange colours had melded into the gold of Jamaica in a unified Jungle, there was a chilling message on the screen - the Carter Centre has stated that they have not observed the type of garrison politics practised in Jamaica anywhere else in the world.