



*Ghett'a Life review: Gritty, grimy and good*

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*Social issues have once again rolled into the realm of Jamaican filmmaking. This time the commentary goes beyond what is, and explores what can and needs to be done.*

Written, directed and produced by Chris Browne, Jamaica's Ghett'a Life is set against the backdrop of the broken and politically divided inner-city community of Kingston. The film speaks to the pursuit of a young man, Derrick, in realising his dream of representing his country as a boxer. He is challenged by the discouragements of his politically entrenched and blinded father, life-threatening deterrence from the area don and a potential violent clash of communities that may result from his actions.

Derek, however, defies all obstacles and sets out on a path to achieve his goal while uniting his divided community of 'Jungle',

Browne examines the gripping effects of garrison politics as a force that only benefits a few while destroying the lives of many. The rivalry that is fed by politicians is naturally accepted and carried out by community members. Although the awful realities of ghetto life are depicted, the film ends on a note of hope with a unified community; one that is willing to place country over party.

The storyline is well written and straightforward; the audience is able to follow the plot without getting lost in any uncertainty. More important, is that the viewers can no doubt connect with the varying line of characters who, commendably, displayed quality acting.

The film sees both new and seasoned actors coming together; from Ardenne High student Kevoy Burton, who plays the lead character Derrick, to Actor Boy awardee and well-known actor Christopher McFarlane, who is known as Don Sin in the movie. What also helps to bring the movie alive were the appearances of Kerlyn Brown and Rohan Daley, both well-known faces of the CVM newsroom.

Apart from the solid performances, the cinematography was world class; the editing was on point; the sound track was relevant and shot selections were fitting to the over-all theme. As with every real life situation, Ghett'a Life evokes various ranges of emotions; the audience is able to laugh at the character Big Toe's witty comments and is forced to hold back tears when Derek struggles with serious warnings against boxing at the gym and his heart's desire to box.

Behind the explicit occurrences, the audience is reminded of the social situation of the politically infested inner-city communities, the struggles of the youths of these communities and most importantly, viewers are called to act; act against political garrisons and those who contribute to its existence.

Browne illustrates that a man's determination to do good should never be underestimated and even in the face of adversity, one should persevere. What is also demonstrated is that intervention from both members and non-members of the communities are important.

If one was unsure of the implications of politically divided communities Ghett'a Life clears up all doubt and does so remarkably. Along with all other messages of the film, let us remember as youths to never give up on our dreams. A movie made for all ages and societies of Jamaica, Ghett'a Life is a must-see.

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