

KINGS OF THE PARK



SYNOPSIS

In a small West London community in 1972 fourteen-year old Jamie Delourde the eldest of five brothers deals with poverty and a violent father. His mother suffers a nervous breakdown and Jamie and his brothers seek sanctuary amongst the castle turrets and tranquil gardens of the local park. Their kingdom and reign as Kings of the Park is put in jeopardy when they are challenged for their territory by local ethnic youths led by the Gill gang. Jamie's fortunes then seem to take a turn for the better when he is asked to sing lead soprano at the Vatican in Rome. He is then left completely disillusioned when his father refuses to cover the travelling costs. Bullied and ridiculed at school about his mother Jamie finally follows his father's lead and uses violence as a way to kick back at his tormentors.

It is 1978; an antisocial volatile twenty-year old Jamie is induced into the world of race related gang violence by local publican, John Moran and schoolteacher Gerald Stopps – both National Front members. Assisted by Moran's son Carl he is brainwashed into fighting Asian youths to keep his social identity. A chance encounter with charismatic musician Josh Carr rekindles Jamie's earlier passion for music. Enrolling in Josh's music workshop he forms a band 'The Park Side Boys', relishing his role of band front man. Josh's use of music as a common denominator starts to bring the local youths together at his music club.

Racial tension and local unrest reaches fever pitch after the murder of local council candidate Varinder Singh. The finger of suspicion is pointed squarely at John Moran, but lack of physical evidence leads to no arrests. Jamie and his gang violently clash with angry Asian youths. Josh furiously confronts Jamie about his misguided loyalty and tells him he must make a choice between the club and the gang. He reluctantly turns his back on Josh his allegiance to his friends is too strong.

Carl Moran, jealous of Jamie's new status with the band and his growing influence in the gang attacks and racially abuses Jamie's black bass player Des, Jamie now sees that Moran is out of control he is tipped off that Josh is next on Moran's' hit list. Jamie pleads with Josh not to attend a protest rally demonstrating against a National Front meeting held at the local town hall. Josh tells him not to worry.

At the rally skinheads arrive and in an ensuing riot Josh suffering a head wound is separated from Jamie and carried to the nearby park. Carl Moran fatally stabs Josh and disappears into the night. Jamie arrives and tearfully holds his dying friend. Josh asked him not to take the law into his own hands as he slips away.

In a clinical well – orchestrated attack, masked youths led by Jamie, petrol bomb Moran's public house. As Carl Moran and the gang flee the blazing inferno, Jamie overpowers him and turns a blade down on his victim. Des and a local journalist scream at Jamie that evidence has been gathered to tie Moran and his associates to the 2 murders. He is quickly brought to his senses and drives the blade down towards Moran but into the pavement the blade snaps in half. It is almost like he can hear he Josh's voice repeating his dying wish not to meet violence with violence. The first thing Jamie ever wrote in his diary at twelve was to meet violence full on a lesson his father had taught him earlier in the film. The cycle is now broken, Jamie and the youths make their escape under the cover of darkness into the night down the old canal paths.

Moran and his associates are charged. The influence of the National Front is no more. Jamie arranges a concert in memory of Varinder Singh and his friend Josh, who he tells the crowd, taught him to judge someone on whom they are not by colour or creed.



Back Story **Blare Peach**

Blare Peach was a special-needs teacher from New Zealand who died aged 33 on 23rd April 1979 whilst attending anti-Nazi demonstration in Southall, West London. The National Front had decided to hold a public meeting during the election campaign. Over 3000 protesters, including members of the Southall Movement, the Indian Workers Association and the Anti-Nazi League protested about the presence of the National Front in a predominantly Asian community.

Blare Peach was a member of Socialists Works Party and the Anti-Nazi League. He was a teacher whom former pupils paid tribute commenting after his death that he really cared about their futures. It has been said his ideals will live way beyond his death no matter who was responsible for his sad demise.

Blare Peach became a symbol of resistance to racism. Without his death I would not have been inspired to create the character of Josh Carr, the mentor figure for the protagonist Jamie Delourde and all the other young characters that appear in this film.



Worst Outbreaks of Violence this Century

The Brixton riot of 1981 was one of many inner-city riots in the United Kingdom around this time. Lewisham, Toxteth and Southall saw similar carnage occur. The severity of the violence was highlighted in an inquiry carried out by Lord Scarman who was quoted at the time saying “These are without doubt the worst outbreaks of disorder the country has seen this century”. The report clearly outlined the serious social and economic problems of this period. Cars and buildings burned, and shops were looted in these areas as the street battles raged. The cause for this major social unrest was attributed to record high unemployment and a growth in the support of the National Front.

The film ‘Kings of the Park’ again draws from these events in particular the riot that took place in Southall, West London. Here a National Front public house was set upon by rioters armed with Petrol Bombs and in the ensuing attack the public house was burnt to the ground. The situation in Southall between the National Front and in particular the local Asian community had reached a point of no return.

Many had predicted that something like this was bound to happen. Protagonist, Jamie Delourde, will be seen seeking vengeance over the death of his mentor. The Death of Josh Carr triggers off a backlash from a large section of the youth community against the National Front orchestrated by Jamie; leading to a dramatic climax to the film. We will see Jamie finally come face to face with Carl Moran, the man responsible for Josh Carr’s death. Jamie, with hate deep in his heart, intends to seek vengeance by taking the life of his former friend Carl Moran.



The Clash in 1978 at Victoria Park – Rock Against Racism Concert.

The Clash performed at the most memorable anti-National Front event ever staged. A rally of around 100,000 people marched the 6 miles from Trafalgar Square through London’s East End.

This was known as the heart of National Front Territory they then converged on Victoria Park. Here a concert took place with some of the biggest artists of the day performing for the musical movement ‘Rock against Racism’.

I was young teenage songwriter musician growing up in a large multi-ethnic area in West London at the time that Rock against Racism was first formed. I heard about this through other friends of mine. It has always been very clear to me what musicians and filmmakers have been able to achieve through the medium of film and music, they can completely change someone's social perspective. In relation with the start of the movement 'Rock Against Racism' musicians were given the opportunity to perform an event to make people aware of how wrong it was to be racist. In the United Kingdom at this time there was growing support for the National Front Party. This is why this movement was so groundbreaking and worthwhile as it finally highlighted and eventually played a major part in massively reducing the support of the National Front.

As the writer of Kings of the Park and in terms of the structure and direction of the film, this event and the movement along with the social unrest and inner-city rioting were some of the key elements I used when I came to structuring the story. The main part of the narrative in Kings of the Park is the charismatic and well-known musician Josh Carr opening a performing arts club in a largely multi ethnic community. The club is the catalyst for the direction the narrative takes in the second act. The club opening leads to major conflict and rivalry between the various youths of the area. The protagonist, the rebellious and disillusioned youth Jamie Delourde, is a talented songwriter/musician who runs with a predominantly racist gang.

A PATH THAT SEALED HIS DESTINY



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