

O rap do pequeno príncipe contra as almas sebosas / The Little Prince's Rap Against the Wicked Souls

Directed by: Paulo Caldas and Marcelo Luna

Montage: Marcelo Moraes

Produced by: Leila Bourdoukan and Renata Rudge

Date: 2000

Runtime: 75'

Country: Brazil

Language: Portuguese (no subtitles)

Availability in the UK: Queen Mary, University of London, Library

Two young men coming from the same social background – the poor outskirts of Recife, one of the biggest cities in Brazil – become two very different types of citizens. One has become a drummer in a rap band, the other is a dangerous hit man who has killed 44 people and is now in jail.

The film starts with the camera shot at pavement level, slowly following a man rhythmically writhing along the street on his stomach, with a view only of other people's legs and feet walking past him. The frame then jumps to a montage sequence of Recife at night and finally cuts to someone running breathlessly through the city backstreets with the camera angle positioned as though it was being filmed through the runner's eyes.

21-year-old Hélio José Muniz Filho is the vigilante nicknamed 'Little Prince', an articulate youth who seems to have no real regrets or remorse about his killing spree, but on the other hand does not gloat, it is just a fact. Interestingly, both Filho and de Oliveira on different occasions use the term 'wicked souls' to describe their enemies. Before his incarceration, Filho led a small gang of less articulate individuals who are interviewed wearing caps and bandanas to hide their identities. They have an almost comical outlook with their ideas as to whom and what has influenced them e.g. Steven Segal's films, nevertheless they are deadly serious in following through with their chosen 'line of work'.

José Alexandre Santos de Oliveira, 27, is a drummer in a rock band called Faces do Subúrbio / Faces from the Suburbs. Although a pacifist, his music is aggressive and fervently leftist with a goal for his band to educate people through its music about life in Recife and Brazil as a whole. To underpin his leftist credentials, we see him having a photograph of Che Guevara tattooed on his back, just underneath the pictures of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. De Oliveira neither condones nor criticizes what Filho has done, but understands how the horror of urban living can drive someone to extreme behaviour and expresses the need to channel your anger into something positive.

The camera shots and angles are aesthetically very pleasing, with the documentary jumping back and forth between the two main antagonists, but also including interviews with Filho's mother, scenes of gun-totting police covering up another dead body, incredible close-up shots of individuals and a pace helped along by the energy of both drum and rap music along with rapid montage sequences through the streets of the city. The documentary shows how the crime-ridden streets of Recife live side by side with the wealthy and hedonistic beach culture and lifestyle, which is a fact of life in most big cities in Brazil. It also starkly reminds us of how individuals with almost identical upbringings can digress so much in their life choices with such astonishing effect on their own life

and on the lives of those around them, especially when we learn at the end of the film that Filho and De Oliveira are best friends.

The film ends back at the man crawling on his stomach and as the camera angle rises, we see that he is doing this as penance for his sins at what appears to be a religious festival. This recurring image frames the film on a moral and religious note.

Real characters are presented on location.

RELATED INFORMATION

Other documentaries by Paulo Caldas and Marcelo Luna include:
Opera Cola (1992)

Other films by Paulo Caldas include
Baile perfumado / Perfumed Ball (1997)
Chá / Tea (1988)
O bandido da sétima luz / The Bandit of the Seventh Light (1987)
Nem tudo são flores / Not Everything Are Flowers (1985)
Morte no Capibaribe / Death in Capibaribe (1983)

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AHRC Project [Brazilian and Argentine Documentary Film-Making](#)

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