



LORDS OF DOGTOWN

USA | 2005 | 107m | 12A

Director: Catherine Hardwicke

Screenplay: Stacy Peralta

Cinematography: Elliot Davis

Editing: Nancy Richardson

Original Music: Mark Mothersbaugh

Leading Players: Heath Ledger, Emile Hirsch, Vincent Laresca, Johnny Knoxville, Michael Angarano



Skateboarding is often thought of as a modern teen craze; adolescent boys kitted out in a uniform consisting of baggy Fubu jeans accessorised with novelty badges and chains, footwear is strictly loose fitting Nike Dunks, the anthem is surely OPM Heaven is a Halfpipe, not to mention the nobles of the 'skater world' Sum 41, Blink 182 and for those hybrid skaters the Wu Tang Clan. Few may realise that the skateboarding movement in fact dates back to the Venice, California circa 1972.

Lords of Dogtown is a dramatised biography of the Z-Boys who were a group of friends that grew up in a run down neighbourhood in Santa Monica, California during the 1970's. They spent their time surfing and skating, at the local beach and attained their wild and rebellious reputation from trespassing onto suburban home-owners property and using their empty pools during the drought to skate in. They became known first locally and now globally as the infamous Z-Boys; the fresh and young skate crew who changed the skateboarding world evermore. They are respected today for pioneering ground-breaking and influential techniques.

The founding members of the Z-Boys were:

Jay Adams; Tony Alva ;Bob Biniak; Chris Cahill; Paul Constantineau; Shogo Kubo; Jim Muir; Peggy Oki; Stacy Peralta; Nathan Pratt; Wentzle Ruml IV; Allen Sarlo.

It all began in 1971 when Jeff Ho opened a surf shop called 'Jeff Ho Surfboards and Zephyr Productions' (the Z in boys stands for Zephyr). Here the boys bonded and formed the original crew. It was clear even at this early time the group dominated the waves near the Pacific Ocean Park CA. (aka Dogtown) and they decided to apply the same technique used in surfing to concrete with their skateboards. The Z-Boys abandoned conventional styles of 'trick' skating and encouraged each other to push themselves to the limits and create new moves.

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At this time skateboarding was seen to be the sport for 'drop outs' those at the bottom of society, who were going nowhere in life and were viewed to be rebellious hooligans. In 1975 Ho started a separate posse for skateboarding coached by Skip Engblom. The group gained more members and competed in their first competition the Del Mar Nationals one of the biggest skateboarding competitions of its time since the sport first came to light in the 1960s'. The Z-Boys took the competition by storm but failed to impress the older competitors, they did not appreciate the young new crew and their new style, unbeknown to them, the old style was soon to be over taken by the Z-Boys mind-blowing airborne moves. Soon after the Z-Boys had a massive cult following and became legends amongst their peers and predecessors, their daring tricks had created 'aerial skateboarding' they had set the bar extremely high for any future rivals.

The sport needed young fresh innovation, the Z-Boys had a vision, a passion and voice to be heard that they expressed through their skateboarding together rebelling against the mainstream expectations and standards. However, they were too young to handle the fame and money thrown at them, and keeping the group together proved to be, sadly, impossible. By 1976 the group had gone their separate ways.

The Z-Boys influence on skateboarding is phenomenal, arguably skateboarding would not have the same following it does today without their creativity. Their notoriety and excellence has been preserved in many books, documentaries and films. The legend is more accurately portrayed in the 2001 film Dogtown and Z-Boys, directed by Stacey Peralta and was a winning documentary in the Sundance Festival. Peralta wrote the screenplay for Lords of Dogtown which boasts an outstanding cast, including the late Heath Ledger. This film is not only a credit to its subjects but is topical in our festival as Ledger's unfinished role in Terry Gilliam's latest film The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus was released this year. Lest we be reminded of Ledger's convincing and absorbing performances in some of his earlier work with Dogtown, Ledger was awarded 'Actor of the Year' by The Central Ohio Film Critics Association for his portrayal of Skip Engblom.

The film captures the spirit of the Z-Boys and the liberating and exciting era of the 1970's. The soundtrack consumes its audience, taking you to California on a fast and daring skateboard with patrons such as Pink Floyd, T.Rex, David Bowie, Jimmy Hendrix and Iggy Pop.

BFF Film Note by Gemma James

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