



REDEMPTION: THE STAN “TOOKIE” WILLIAMS STORY

Starring Jamie Foxx and Lynn Whitfield

Premieres on FX on Sunday, April 11th at 8:00 p.m. et/pt

Redemption, an FX Original Movie, is based on the true story of Stan “Tookie” Williams, co-founder of the infamous Crips street gang in Los Angeles. The film depicts how his time in jail inspired him to help inner-city youth by writing children’s books, which in turn earned him three Nobel Prize nominations.

Jamie Foxx stars as Williams, with Lynn Whitfield co-starring as Barbara Becnel, the woman who befriended Williams and helped him secure a book deal to spread his word of peace. Rounding out the cast is CCH Pounder as Winnie Mandela, Brenden Jefferson as the young Stan Williams and Lee Thompson Young as Charles Becnel.

Directed by Vondie Curtis Hall (*Gridlock’d*), *Redemption* was written by J.T. Allen (*The Good Old Boys*). The film is executive produced by Rudy Langlais (*The Hurricane*), Van Spurgeon, Jamie King and Marcus King in association with Fox Television Studios.

Redemption follows the transformation of Williams, from troubled youth to convicted murderer to Nobel Prize nominee. When we first see Williams, he is already on San Quentin’s death row, preaching peace to children who have come to visit him. The jarring images set the rhythm for the juxtaposition between the past and present as Williams comes to terms with his violent past and extraordinary present.

The route of that brutal history begins as we see Williams as a child, and the struggles his mother has in raising him. In 1971, at the age of 16, living in chaotic, violent, gang-ridden South Central Los Angeles, Williams develops a fearsome reputation as a fighter and “street general” of South Central’s west side. To combat rival gangs, he and east side gang leader Raymond Washington join forces to create a gang they call the Crips.

For the next eight years, Williams, Washington and their gang rule the streets, even as other gangs rise up around them, most notably their rivals – the Bloods. In 1979, Washington is murdered by a rival gang member in an escalating war. Consumed by anger and tragedy, Williams is soon arrested. In 1981, he is convicted of killing four people and sentenced to die.

Long ensconced on death row, Williams comes to the attention of journalist Barbara Becnel. A single mother living in Los Angeles and raising a teenage son who is at-risk to the gang life, Becnel wants to write a book about the Crips, and is interested in interviewing “the monster” who helped create the gang. She arranges a visit to San Quentin where she meets Williams, who is immediately standoffish, suspecting that Becnel is out to exploit him.

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Drawn to each other's willfulness and challenging power, they eventually come respect one another, and Williams asks Becnel's help in delivering a message of peace to the streets. He begins to write books for children, and Becnel is so moved by his words that she dedicates herself to help Williams.

Williams first book was published in 1996. He since has published seven. His books and his role as one of the authors of the now-famous gang truce between the Crips and the Bloods led to his being nominated for two Nobel Peace Prizes and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Jamie Foxx is currently in production on Michael Mann's *Collateral* opposite Tom Cruise in Los Angeles, marking a reunion of Foxx and Mann, who directed Foxx in *Ali*. The film will be released in August 2004 by Dreamworks Pictures. After Foxx wraps *Collateral*, he will begin work on the action-thriller *Stealth* (Columbia Pictures) for director Rob Cohen (*XXX*, *The Fast and the Furious*) and will also star in the romantic comedy *The Breakup Handbook* alongside Gabrielle Union and as music legend Ray Charles in *Unchain My Heart: The Ray Charles Story* for director Taylor Hackford.

Lynn Whitfield is best known for her Emmy® Award winning portryal of Josephine Baker in the HBO movie *The Josephine Baker Story*. She also received an NAACP Image Award in 1992 for her role in the drama series *Stompin' at the Savoy*. Whitfield has since appeared in the Martin Lawrence comedy *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate*, the ABC miniseries *The Wedding* and the *Eve's Bayou*. Most recently, Whitfield appeared in the film *Head of State* with Chris Rock and Bernie Mac.

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