



Kings of L.A.

A feature film

Written and Developed by
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FILM DECK



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Logline

A young man at a critical point in his life struggles to navigate through the socio-economical ills and temptations of his city as the demographics and culture shift around him.

Synopsis

A young man at a critical point in his life struggles to navigate through the socio-economical ills and temptations of his city as the demographics and culture shift around him. After the riots of 1992, the area of South Central Los Angeles separated from the city Los Angeles to incorporate and form its own municipality and infrastructure; mayor, city council, police force, and school system.

Donald “Snooks” Perkins’ father Alvin went to prison shortly after the ’92 riots due to a failed robbery attempt after his job went up in flames. Snooks, a smart, street-wise, good-natured, but conflicted individual was forced to grow up fatherless and navigate life as young Black man on his own and is currently at a crossroad in life. Just turning 30, he looks to his friends Satin, an aging aspiring rapper, and his elder neighborhood hero, Bosco, who has a dark past of his own, as influences and voices of reasons.

Snooks already has one child with Tasha, a hard edge girl who’s currently dating Mike-Mike, a hustler/drug distributor who’s in business with two rogue undercover cops, Artie and Jerry, aka Crisco and Bart, Special Investigation Division officers of the South Central Police Department. Artie and Jerry’s foul policing habits catch up to them as their small-time profiting from arrests and drug deals lead them to more greed as they attempt to muscle a marijuana dispensary that the city has been watching closely for a while for municipal violations, among other suspicious activities.

A key figure in the local government is the mayor, Randall Taylor, a handsome, charming lawyer who’s under pressure from outsiders; including an undercover Federal agent, to sell off some of the city’s land for new development and big business plans. But one individual who’s watching the mayor’s moves closely, as well as the outside influence is a Pro-Black activist/vigilante and lifelong South Central resident by the name of Sundown. Sundown is the city’s unsung Black super hero, protecting it from gentrification, encouraging Black wealth development, and promoting old school values that move the culture forward and safeguard the city from corruption.



Sundown is also at the forefront of the movement of a simmering discord that has developed between the lifelong Black residents of the city and the newer influx of Mexican residents. The mayor must control the disconnect between his city council, the division between his police department and the residents of the city, as well as mitigate his own personal indiscretions.

Snooks' life path repeats that of his father's as he struggles to maintain employment while his girlfriend Jackie becomes pregnant. Receiving pressure from his friend Satin as a result from a perceived favor he owes him, they devise a plan to make some fast money. Unfortunately for them, their plan concurrently mirrors a scheme of officers Artie and Jerry, on the same night. The Mayor's problems also come to a head on the same faithful night as Snooks' and Artie and Jerry's plans, as the entire city becomes under siege by its own residents, police force, and outsiders who are all driven by desperation and financial gain.

With the body count high on this faithful night, Snooks is left standing and he has to sort of his life as he has only created new problems for himself. Sundown uses his Intel on Mayor Taylor's political indiscretions to get him to eliminate the powerful outside influencer to the city; the undercover Federal Agent. Sundown now has the Mayor under his watch and is keeping him honest, while Snooks flees the city with his pregnant girlfriend to reunite with his mother and his young daughter that he took from his ex Tasha.



OVERVIEW

Kings of L.A. is a feature film that explores the relations between various groups within a small urban community within the city of Los Angeles, attempting to survive and co-exist as one. A gritty, truthful, and realistic narrative of various sociological elements including, but not limited to; race relations, politics, law enforcement, gangs, narcotics, and socio-economical development.

But unlike many previous urban crime drama films, Kings of L.A. plans to inject a shot of supreme reality into its viewing audience and unapologetically attack many issues that other shows have addressed, but handled in a more conservative way, or just completely ignored. This film will be realism at the highest level. It's not just a street film with a police and city government tie-in; it's the ultimate multi-layered case study on the new urban city experience.

All themes of the film, including each individual groups involved are suffering from some sort of impaired functionality. There are various subcultures within all of these groups. There is struggle within the city government's infrastructure and various neighborhood communities within the city. The Police Department is the buffer between City government and the citizens. A very humanistic approach to demonstrating the Police Department's role within the city will be utilized. These individuals are flawed from a procedural standpoint and a character standpoint. As a result, they are an important fixture in the storyline and they are in a constant battle with the city government and the citizens, but even more importantly, internally. We will see the good, the bad, and the ugly of policing a city that currently has a low socio-economical status, with a high crime rate to go along with it, which are directly related to one another here.

From a technical standpoint, the film will have a surreal visual aesthetic that will make it even more relatable to a wide audience, almost in the vein of a crime reality series. The camera is constantly moving, specifically during the "street" scenes, with sparingly used quick cut and edits. Even in the more narrative heavy scenes we will employ Cinéma vérité tactics. We want to bring the viewers into the film.



THE SETTING/CITY

A case of art occasionally imitating life

For decades, South Central Los Angeles has always been a proverbial geographical area in Los Angeles, but not an actual city itself with its own separate infrastructure. With this film, we are creating a fictitious city and an actual one that exists in the eyes of the audience, that covers this particular area of what is now know today as South Los Angeles. Many current general statistical factual elements about the area of South Central L.A. will coincide with certain themes of the film. But for the most part all creative elements are built for the purpose of story progression. This is essentially a film about a city created within a city. The only guarantee here is the usage of the name.

South Central Los Angeles is a wide territory in Los Angeles County, which is located to southeast and the southwest of downtown Los Angeles, with the 110 freeway being the lifeline which runs right through the heart of this area. For the purpose of this film, our primary borders of this area that will be covered will be north of El Segundo Blvd., south of Slauson Ave., east of Crenshaw Blvd., and West of Wilmington Blvd.

There has been a population shift in recent years with Mexicans now being the largest ethnic group behind African Americans, which formerly held that position. Despite that statistic, for the purpose of this show, the Mayor, Police Chief, majority of city Council Members and business owners, and many people in positions of power are still black and the police department is primarily black as well.

South Central L.A. has had a notorious history for its gang activity and high crime rate. Although there has been a significant decline in both areas since their height in the 1980's, there is still a strong presence lurking, with that of now even more Mexican residents, who have taken over the rein of primary drug players in the city. There are still more Black gangs though.

Being a city undergoing a cultural transitional shift, law enforcement officials and the city's government are figuring out how to curtail the historical ills of the city while also still searching for a new identity and creating an improved image. But despite some negative external media coverage, the city internally remains progressive, with many well manicure tract housing neighborhoods. Just like many other urban cities across the nation, this city is made up of many inhabitants from various social walks of life. Despite suffering from non-favorable imagery, there is still a sense of pride within the city, but the city is still just as segregated as it was with the influx of Blacks during the 1950's. We will show a mix of various cultural and socio-economical conditions.



THE PLAYERS

Who they are

THE OFFICIALS

1) MAYOR TAYLOR – Black, 40-45. Elected to his first term as mayor almost four years ago and is currently beginning to seek re-election for the upcoming campaign. He's flashy and high profile. He's had a moderately successful first term, with a lot of critics in a city in transition. He's a family man, but has questionable indiscretions in her personal life. He runs a small non-specialty law firm in town where he's a general practitioner. In a city that has a majority Latino populous, he has managed to appease most of his constituents. He means well, but ultimately succumbs to the pressures of being a man of power in a city that is deemed financially viable to outsiders due to its location.

2) ARTIE – White, 40-50 detective, and career cop, senior member of the small S.I.D. (Special Investigations Division) unit that supervises the department gang and drug strategies. Some White members of this division are also member of the department's secret pseudo gang society, "South Central Cowboys". He's a Sheriff's Department lateral transfer with a few years on the SCPD. He transferred to avoid an investigation . He's married and has always teetered on the border of being a rogue cop but recently gains the confidence to operate outside the lines due to the South Central L.A. Department's ongoing procedural changes and dysfunction. With retirement and collection of a full pension not being in the immediate future due to his transfer, he looks to leave law enforcement soon, one way or another. He ethically just doesn't care as much anymore.

3) MASON – Black, 45, female detective, new to the S.I.D. unit, South Central Cowboy member and a few years on the department. First Black officer allowed in to the unit due to corroborating Artie on false police report he filed. She wants to move up the ranks and he was previously with another department as a transit cop so he's extra ambitious to be on the street and aims to please Artie. She has a questionable pass. Although she is willing to follow Artie into almost any situation, she does have her own opinion on Artie's type of policing which he feels is somewhat "outdated" at times.



THE NEIGHBORHOOD

1) DONALD "SNOOKS" PERKINS - Black, 30, neighborhood hustler. Non-active gangbanger who's avoided serious prison time. A very street smart and a cool, respected type. He's the kind of guy that can do anything in the legitimate world and he has tech and entrepreneurial aspirations. Non-aggressive unless he's forced to be. He looks up to Sundown, who's a family friend and respected former big time city hustler.

2) SATIN - Black, 29, an aspiring rapper. Snooks' homeboy. He's an opportunist and will do anything to get on and advance his rap career, including sacrificing his closest relationships. He uses "flockin" as a method to fund his rap career, but he is always looking for a bigger come up. His narcissism and egotism mask his insecurities and personal demons. Often speaks about himself in the third person, which sometimes comes off as bi-polar. Snooks admires his "don't give a fuck" attitude.

3) BOSCO - Black, 40-45, a former dope dealer and respected gangster during the 90's. Age and maturity have toned him down, but he's always one big lick away returning to the streets. He has seen the city change right in front of him, growing up during the height of the gang and dope scenes in South Central. He's Snooks' big homie and hood idol. Snooks recruits him on his robbery mission with Satin to Satin's dismay. Satin's greed motivates him to eliminate him from the equation.

4) SUN-DOWN - Black- 45-55, a boss-type figure, Black nationalist, and protector of the city. The product of post WWII southern migrants, his ideologies and moves are based on his wanting to preserve the Black culture, demographic control/establishing voting blocks, and Black political and economical empowerment through the building of Black owned business and further development of homegrown talent. He is vigilant towards his enemies, which are any individuals or groups who oppose, threaten, or jeopardize his vision, especially other Blacks. His moto is "an eye for an eye" and he believes in policing his own community.

5) SPANKY – Mexican, 30-40, low scale dope distributor and auto body shop manager. He operates his uncle's auto body shop which serves as a small distribution hub for drugs. He's heavy-set (hence the name "Spanky"), often times feisty, but a smart individual. He lives in the barrio and is a gangbanger by default. Artie and Jerry don't have full insight to his drug operation, but they do know something and they allow him to operate in lieu of occasional kickbacks and street information.



6) JACKIE - Mexican, 25-30. Snooks' girlfriend. Beautiful woman that struggles with low self-esteem, due to family issues. Family disapproves of the relationship with Snooks. She's looking for any kind of escape from her home situation.

7) PIPER - Black, 48, Sun-Down's hit man. He handles all of his dirty work. He whistles prior to executing his victims. He secretly harbors different aspirations from Son-Down. He's an outsider of the city and met Son-Down in the penitentiary in the late 80's as a young adult. Sun-Down took him under his wing and protected him.

VAN ELDER - BIO

(writer, director, producer)

Van Elder is a native of Compton, California. He has written, directed, produced, and edited six feature films, "I Left My Heart in Colombia (2023), "Kings of L.A." (2022), "Perfectly Single" (2019), "DWB: Dating While Black" (2018), "Divine Intervention" (2007) and "Issues" (2006). "Kings of L.A." is now in post production, while "Perfectly Single" was acquired by BET Network in 2020. Both "Divine Intervention" and "Issues" received a limited theatrical release and subsequently were released on DVD and cable Television. He also wrote, directed, and produced the super natural comedy series "Spook Hunters", released on Amazon Prime. Additionally, he has directed four award winning short films; "Truth Among Men" (2013), "A Tale of Two Sisters" (2004), "Out-of-Body Experience (2005)", and "Sigmund the See Monster" (2003). "A Tale of Two Sisters" won the independent spirit award at the Gaffers Film Festival. "Out-of-Body Experience" was selected for Showtime Networks' 2005 Black Filmmakers Showcase and broadcast on Showtime Networks for 10 years. "Sigmund" was a runner up in the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame. "Truth Among Men" (2013) has screened nationally on NBC. Van's films have appeared on the following networks: Showtime Networks, Starz, BET Television, Bounce TV, NBC, and CBS.

Van's work has spread into other visual areas; including directing music videos, a sketch comedy Television series, a Variety Television show, multiple Web and digital Series, a documentary and many other media related projects. He is also a cinematographer. After years of deferring his dreams, Van decided to leave law school and pursue his dreams of becoming a storyteller. He would receive his Master's Degree in Communication Studies, with an emphasis in Film and Television from Cal State Los Angeles and previously, a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, with a minor in Liberal Studies from Cal State Long Beach. In addition to his production work, Van has also authored and optioned numerous screenplays.