

## 'Born In Trench Town' heads home

Born in Trench Town is a documentary about the interwoven social, architectural, and political histories of Jamaica's most famous neighbourhood.

The film comprises interviews and scenes of daily contemporary life in Trench Town. Many of the residents have lived there since the beginning and have witnessed the entire history. For younger generations who did not know the community before the violence started, perceptions and life are markedly different. The film traverses from First to Seventh Street through the maze of holes in the walls that separate the yards, created when it was too dangerous to walk on streets, stopping along the way to consider the conditions that created the Trench Town of today. Junior Lee, a community leader and long-time resident, and Jamaican architect Christopher Whyms-Stone who has done extensive research about the history of the architecture of Kingston 12, guide the journey through the streets and history of Trench Town. This small area has had a large impact on Jamaica. The history of the place is told by its residents, with the intent to give them a voice in the national conversations in the 50th year of the country's independence. The film includes interviews with Michael Smith in London, who was the first president of the Trench Town Development Association. Smith was one of several community members who worked extensively for the betterment of Trench Town and was instrumental in the founding of Trench Town's Culture Yard. After the murder of one of his confidants Magnus Skeen, Smith fled Jamaica, sensing his life was in jeopardy. Born in Trench Town had its world premiere at the One Love Reggae Festival in the United Kingdom on August 12. Best new documentary The documentary received the distinction of 'best new documentary' at the festival. Now the documentary will face its toughest challenge, the scrutiny of a Jamaican audience which is well aware of the significance of Trench Town and is eager to ensure it is portrayed properly. The film will have its premiere in Jamaica at The Red Bones Blues Café on Argyle Road. Its director is Greg Pond, while the executive producer is Dixon Myers. Myers is also the coordinator of Outreach at Sewanee: The University of the South. His distinctive pilotage lies in experiential education in the Caribbean and the American South. Life and extended travels in these regions reflect an ardent passion for storytelling, understanding and teaching of these multi-faceted cultures. According to a press release from those closest to the creation of the film, the production was almost accidental. "Born in Trench Town began unexpectedly and has evolved over the years. The creators did not realise the scope and the significance of the stories they would find when they started," read the release. The 'creators' ended up making a number of short films, spanning years, and have put them all together to create a feature-length film. Those short films, Pond and company explain, "comprise a very compelling and troubled history of the place". The stories, they explain, tell of the violence that came from political rivalry and how its legacy still remains today. Jamaica Gleaner