

***TSOTSI* QUOTE BANK**

TRADE AND CONSUMER PRESS

**WINNER – THE STANDARD LIFE AUDIENCE AWARD,
2005 EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**WINNER – MICHAEL POWELL AWARD FOR BEST BRITISH FEATURE,
2005 EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

**WINNER – PEOPLE’S CHOICE AUDIENCE AWARD
TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL 2005**

WINNER – AFI AUDIENCE AWARD 2005

**WINNER
Audience Award
Denver and St Louis International Film Festivals Nov 2005**

**WINNER
Critics Award at the Sitenghi Film Festival in Cape Town Nov 2005**

**WINNER
Thessaloniki Film Festival, Greek Parliament’s Human Values Award Nov 2005**

“Touched by the kind of dynamism that also marked *City of God*, *Tsotsi* brings a fresh energy to familiar themes of crime and redemption...Real commercial potential....Crisply edited, compact and compelling, it is filled with bravura moments...until the film’s finale become emotional, edge of the seat high drama.”

Alan Hunter in Edinburgh, *Screen International*, 8/22/05

“Rapturously received by premiere auds at the Edinburgh film fest, ‘Tsotsi’ has the right stuff to be a breakout hit....Powered by a pounding soundtrack of dance hall Kwaito music, the pic has vital, urban energy similar to the Brazilian crossover ‘City of God.’”

Leslie Felperin, *Variety.com*, 8/23/05

The one film that seems to have met with almost universal approval is a terrific South African/British co-production called *Tsotsi*, which is leading the race for the Standard Life Audience Award....It’s evocative, economical storytelling: the first scene tells us with just a few lines of dialogue over a game of dice everything we need to know about Tsotsi and his gang. And it’s a remarkable achievement on the part of the director Gavin Hood that he has the audience shedding tears by the end of the film for a young man they had condemned just 90 minutes before. *Tsotsi* is currently without a UK distributor, although I doubt that will be the case for long.

Wendy Ide, *The Times*

“The spirit of optimism underpins [Gavin Hood’s] third feature....the real focus is the emotional journey of TSOTSI, skillfully played by 19 year old newcomer Presley Chweneyagae ”

David Archibald, *The Financial Times*(UK National)

“There’s a lot going unsaid in *Tsotsi*....tense and genuine, something you don’t come across every day in a movie. Plus the musical score is deeply emotional. The acting by a cast of mostly unknowns is perfect. How many overpaid stars get to make movies like this?...If you leave unaffected, or not even the slightest bit teary, then you have no heart.”

Gator MacReady, *IOFilm*, 8/21/05

“Tsotsi is readily packaged as City Of God in the South African townships, but such a lazy comparison denies this superb, tightly controlled film the individual identity it deserves. Shot with an intimate feel of Johannesburg's corrugated slums the film is less about gangsterism, more a story of a small-time hoodlum's fumbling recovery of a sense of morality after having shot a mother and erroneously kidnapped her infant son”

Steve O’Hagan, *Empire Magazine Online*

“Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi*, set in a Soweto township, is all about atmosphere. The story, in which a criminal steals a car with a baby in the back, takes a back seat to the music and urban patois”.

The Independent(UK National)

TSOTSI STORMS OFF WITH EDINBURGH PRIZES

South African/UK feature *Tsotsi* emerged as the major prize-winner at this year’s Edinburgh Film Festival, winning both the Michael Powell Award for the best British Film and the Standard Life Audience Award as the public favourite.

Set in the shanty towns of South Africa, Gavin Hood’s third feature is based on an Athol Fugard novel and tells of a young hoodlum’s journey from crime towards redemption.

It won widespread critical support but faced tough opposition for the Audience Award from Joss Whedon’s *Serenity*, a big-screen version of his cancelled sci-fi western series *Firefly* that brought fans out in their droves for its Edinburgh world premiere. Michael Kuhn chaired the Michael Powell Jury whose members included director Antonia Bird, actors Eva Birthistle and Alessandro Nivola and veteran screenwriter Paul Mayersberg.

The Festival is expected to record another advance on admission following the 5% increase in 2004 and Artistic Director Shane Danielsen will continue in his currently role for one more edition, the 60th Festival in August 2006.

Prize winners

Standard Life Audience Award -*Tsotsi*

Michael Powell Award for Best New British Feature Film -*Tsotsi*
(Special Commendation -*Song Of Songs*)

Guardian New Directors Award-Mike Mills for *Thumbsucker*

Allan Hunter in Edinburgh, ScreenDaily.com

“Brilliantly directed, an extraordinary piece of work.”

Barry Ronge, 702 Talk radio (South Africa) 7/29/05

“If South Africa ever has a realistic chance to win an Oscar for Best Foreign Picture it will be with this harrowing but brilliant picture - one of the finest to come out of this country. 9 out of 10”.

Janine Walker, The Star (South Africa)

“Brutal but believable, the film in some ways harks back to early Hollywood, when Jimmy Cagney or Richard Widmark played callow villains out of their depth in everyday life. With its highly original setting, "Tsotsi" will appeal to fans of thoughtful crime pictures beyond the festival and art house circuits”

Hollywood Reporter, Aug 30 05

“Highlight: The entire movie rocks! The cinematography is mind blowing, I have never seen isiganga(the open veld) look so beautiful and mystical all at once. This crew of mostly unknown actors is phenomenal and a pleasure to watch”.

JHB Live (South Africa)

AIN'T IT COOL NEWS posting :

Moriarty @ AFI Fest! Is South Africa's TSOTSI One Of The Year's Best?!

Hi, everyone. "[Moriarty](#)" here with some Rumblings From The Lab...

I heard a few things about this film after it played at Toronto, but I made sure I didn't read anything too detailed. I wanted to see it as fresh as possible. When I saw it show up on the schedule of press screenings for the fest, I made it my top priority out of all the screenings.

I'm pretty sure this is the best thing I've seen all year.

TSOTSI is a powerful, piercing story about compassion that works on a personal, emotional level but also makes some cogent points about the larger world. It may be one of the most immediately accessible parables I've ever seen. You can watch the film without ever thinking

of the larger implications, and you'll still have a complete experience. On the other hand, if you open yourself to this film's message, it's nothing less than transformative.

Through it all, Presley Chweyneyagae's performance never strikes a false note. He is nothing less than riveting in every scene.

I'm sure that the intense visceral reaction I had to certain scenes has to do with the fact that I'm a new parent. Tsotsi isn't equipped to deal with the baby he finds, and some of the early mistakes he makes with the baby are horrific. There's one moment involving ants that had me crawling out of my skin. When Tsotsi needs to feed the baby, he targets a young mother he sees carrying her own infant. He forces her to nurse "his" baby at gunpoint. Miriam (Terry Pheto) is terrified, but she can also see that the baby needs help, and her maternal instinct kicks in.

I would consider TSOTSI to be an important film for a post-Weinstein Miramax. In a world where the best performances of the year are the ones that are truly recognized, then both Presley Chweyneyagae and Terry Pheto would be nominated for Oscars. You may see other great performances this year, but this is the definition of great film acting. I believe both of them utterly every time they're onscreen. Harvey Weinstein could have turned this film into a buzz event. He could have sold it to the Academy. That was his gift, the reason Miramax was such a reliable Oscar machine. Now the new Miramax faces a test of their own prowess. I pray they rise to the occasion.

TSOTSI is both entertainment and art, and it marks Gavin Hood as one of the most important new voices in film.

Movie Review – WWW.SPIRITUALITYHEALTH.COM (U.S)

by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Tsotsi

Gavin Hood

Miramax 11/05 Feature Film

Not Rated

We lived in such jaded and cynical times that it has become harder and harder for us to believe in the possibility of somebody totally changing and becoming a new person. Yet in a spiritual world, this happens more than we know. There are so many lives that can be turned around; all it takes is someone to serve as a catalyst for the transformation. This is what happens in *Tsotsi*, a film set in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is directed by Gavin Hood and based on a novel by Athol Fugard.

To prepare yourself for this extraordinary emotional experience, you must allow yourself be immersed into a cruel and capricious world of random violence and incredible poverty. It is also best to set aside any ideas you have about law and order, sociopaths, and the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Stay with the

main character and his descent into darkness, and let yourself feel the loneliness, the anger, and the alienation that he has experienced. Feel also the great harm he brings into the lives of others by his cruel actions. Do not allow your personal ideals about what is good and what is bad to take you away from this story.

Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) is an angry young thief who enjoys gambling with his buddies and stealing from others on the rough streets of Johannesburg. One day he and three members of his gang spot a man with a roll of bills near the subway station. They board the crowded train and surround him. One member of the gang stabs the victim in the heart, and the group flees the scene with the money.

Boston (Mothusi Magano) is repulsed by the senseless violence of the robbery and confronts Tsotsi. He wonders whether he has any "decency" at all. Tsotsi answers with his fists; he beats the conscience-stricken Boston senseless. Tsotsi runs out into the night and hijacks the car of a middle-class African woman (Mothusi Magano). When she tries to stop him, he shoots her. Later he crashes the car after hearing a noise from the back seat and discovering a baby.

Tsotsi puts the infant in a paper bag and takes the child back to his tin hut in shantytown. In flashbacks, we learn of the reason Tsotsi left home: a violent incident which followed his father ordering him out of the room where his mother was dying of AIDS. Tsotsi's father breaks the back of his son's dog with two kicks. Tsotsi flees home and lives in some open-ended drainage pipes outside the city with other orphans and runaways. He learns to look out for himself and to take advantage of the weak and the distracted.

Realizing that he cannot properly feed and take care of the baby, he spots a young woman with a child on her back and follows her home. Miriam (Terry Pheto) turns out to be a widow who makes a meager living sewing and selling mobiles she has created out of shards of glass. Tsotsi forces her at gunpoint to feed the infant. He learns a little about her life, and he is touched by her tenderness with the baby.

In one of the many poignant moments in the story, Tsotsi follows a crippled man in a battered wheelchair into an urban underpass. There he pulls a gun on the man and orders him to hand over the tin can he'd been collecting money in from people in the subway station. Tsotsi learns that the man lost the use of his legs working in the mines, when a beam fell and crushed them. Tsotsi shares the story of losing his beloved dog, and decides not to take the old man's money. Something inside him has already changed. It is the start of a miraculous turnaround in his hard-pressed life.

"Tsotsi" means "thug." The protagonist has adopted it as a shield in a world that seems loveless and wayward at the same time. For those who have eyes to see, the story of the thief on the cross next to Jesus who repents is an indication that grace is operative to anyone, anywhere, and at anytime — even the last possible moment of a life. We don't have the words to describe the experience of watching Tsotsi's slow journey to kindness and human decency after living with the baby.

NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE :

A South African street thug seeks redemption through the care of a young infant he inadvertently picked up during the course of a random car-jacking in director Gavin Hood's adaptation of Athol Fugard's novel. A hair-trigger brute who has adopted the slang term that defines him as his moniker, Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) brutalizes his opponent in a bar fight before acquiring a BMW in a spontaneous car-jacking.

Startled by a noise in the backseat, Tsotsi crashes the car on a deserted highway before realizing that the source of the distracting sound was a small infant still nestled safely in the back seat. His paternal instincts prompting Tsotsi to bring the infant home with him, the aimless youth soon forces the child on a young neighborhood mother Miriam (Terry Pheto) at gunpoint. As Tsotsi's relationships Miriam and the child grow ever more complex, his noble intentions soon give way to more violence. ~ Jason Buchanan, All Movie Guide

SNEERSNIPE.COM :

Baby kidnappings are two a plenty at the cinema from Raising Arizona through to Sympathy for Mr Vengeance even to A Cry in the Dark almost guaranteed to force some melodramatic emotion. Tsotsi, the South African township slang for thug, follows this tradition but shakes it all up with a burst of shanty town desperation and energy similar to City of God. It also might be the best South African film since Soldiers of the Rock.

A strong opening declares that this is a bold brash kind of filmmaking. Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae) the protagonist and his gang of rude upstarts, Butcher, Boston and Aap head to the Johannesburg central train station to commit a robbery. The heist is an audacious blast of violent daring born of the recklessness of extreme poverty, robbing a man on a packed commuter train pressing him, hemming him in amongst the crush. One brutal fight later with Butcher about their actions, Tsotsi runs off and steals a car and unbeknownst to him, a baby also.

Following up this fearless gangster swagger giving the film wide appeal is the relationship that subsequently grows between thug and infant. In this brutal world acridly animated by director Gavin Hood, a genuinely touching bond occurs. Tsotsi clearly sees himself in the child and is trying to give himself a better life. Moments where he pumps up his stereo to jointly conceal the wailing and calm the baby (he dances and clowns also) are great. Later he leaves the baby under his bed in a posh cardy shopping bag with a can of milk and finds a trail of ants on it and on the baby – the word horrified provides starting blocks for where emotions run from with this image. The journey Tsotsi undergoes is amazing from brutal thug to caring human being who kills to protect life not to protect his interests. What's more is that it never seems contrived or overwrought. No mean feat especially considering the compulsive style of the opening.