

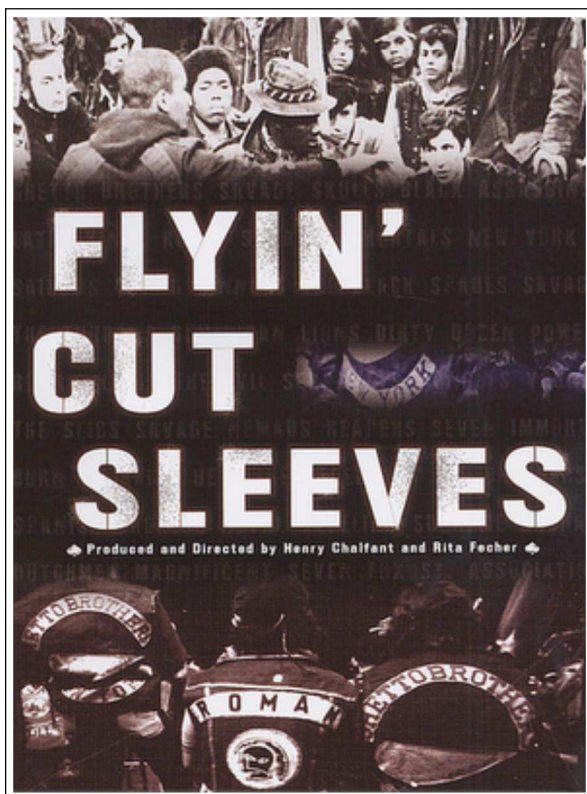
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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010

" Original Gangsters, Part 2 "



FLYIN' CUT SLEEVES, completed in 1993, portrays street gang presidents in the Bronx. The project grew out of the experiences of Rita Fecher, the film's co-producer, who taught in a South Bronx school in the late 1960's and early 1970's, became intimately involved with the gangs, their leaders, and the leaders' families and began to document their lives. Their world was the streets, set against a backdrop of uprooted families, cultural alienation, drugs and violence. Neighborhood teenagers responded by organizing into street groups known to the members as "families", but labeled in the most alarming terms as violent gangs by the press. In fact, the "families" had a stabilizing effect, enabling the youths to cope with their troubled environment. The political climate at the time, movements of national liberation and such organizations as the Black Panthers and Young Lords Party influenced the young gang leaders to aspire to be more than warriors and to become, to some degree, a positive force in their communities. When Rita Fecher returned after twenty years to see what had become of her old friends, she found that they had stayed in the community of their youth, that they were deeply committed to improving conditions there and that they were engaged in helping their own children survive in the hazardous street environment. The documentation of these lives over a twenty-year period offers a remarkable perspective on life in the ghetto (spanning four generations), and the means that people devise to cope from the time that they are children to when they serve as parents and role models for a new generation.

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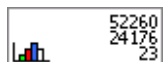


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