

## Looking For Eric

Written by Dave Howard

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The feel good movie of the year is directed by Ken Loach?



Ken Loach is better known for his movies about historical morality and social issues. Case in point, yesterday at the Cannes film festival he denounced George Bush and Tony Blair as war criminals. This was done while walking the red carpet to his own premiere of "Route Irish"

"Looking for Eric" revolves around, Eric (Steve Evets), a postal worker who has buckled from the weight of the mess his life has become. He's at least twice divorced and has custody of his two teenaged sons who have no respect for him. When we first meet him he making a half-assed attempt at killing himself. His friends are a good natured bunch of middle-aged, working class soccer hooligans and they try and help him through this patch with self-help exercises. One of which is envisioning himself as someone he admires. Eric picks Eric Cantona (who plays himself), the legendary French footballer for Manchester United. Later that evening, he hijacks a spliff from one of his sons and Cantona appears in his bedroom. Cantona then dispenses advice that helps him get his life back on track. Eric learns to trust his friends and himself. When it becomes apparent that his son is being prepped for a life of crime but the local mobster, Eric rallies his buddies to take him on in a slapstick attack.

Ken Loach has not sold out! On the surface, the premise may seem like a fluffy comedy but it more than contains it share of gritty and intense moments. Loach never forgets that he is dealing with real people with real problems. But real people do use laughter to deal with their real problems. When the hysterical ending finally arrives, it does seem a little out of place but a just reward nonetheless.

As with all of his movies, Loach is a master of bringing out the best in all of his actors. Every performance has an honest intensity that make them feel three dimensional. Athletes aren't known for their acting chops and Loach brings the sage out of Cantona. The one complaint is that the accents do take some warming up to and muddle some of the plot points. They should definitely think about a subtitled release for the U.S.

"Looking For Eric" is a great flick for the times we are living in. When in doubt look to your heroes, even if they are just the guys at the pub.

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