



Tribeca Digital Studios in Association with The DICK'S
Sporting Goods Foundation Present

WE COULD BE KING

Directed by Judd Ehrlich

Available on VOD, iTunes, and other digital platforms August 12

Run Time: 80 Minutes

Rating: Not Rated

Distributor: Tribeca Film
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New York, NY 10011

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Synopsis

Against the backdrop of a city in upheaval, WE COULD BE KING follows a cast of unforgettable characters through an improbable football season.

Germantown and Martin Luther King High Schools were bitter rivals for over 40 years. This past year, a budget crisis caused Philadelphia to lay off over 4000 employees and close 24 schools, including Germantown High. Now Germantown must merge with their former rival, King. Against overwhelming odds, a 27-year old first time head coach and a new principal fight to inspire young men from difficult circumstances to come together and lift each other toward a better future.

Two-time Emmy® nominated director Judd Ehrlich uses an intimate, unflinching lens to tell a story much larger than the Martin Luther King Cougars. As the threat of more drastic budget cuts and the loss of funding for athletics looms large, WE COULD BE KING examines the crisis of education in urban America, and celebrates the power of sports to bring young people, neighborhoods, and a city together.

We Could Be King Fact Sheet

Philadelphia

- ❖ In 2013, Philadelphia public schools lost over \$300 million in funding, laid off close to 4,000 employees, and closed 37 schools.
- ❖ In the same year, the city spent \$400 million on a new prison.
- ❖ It is estimated that there is currently one guidance counselor per 2,000 public school students.
- ❖ The expected graduation rate for students in Philadelphia is 40-50%.
- ❖ The city has some 40,000 abandoned properties.
- ❖ Philadelphia is known as the “City of Murals” with over 3600 across the city. King’s mural arts program was terminated due to lack of funding.
- ❖ The future of public school funding in Philadelphia remains uncertain. Projections for 2014-15 include an estimated \$400 million shortfall in funding. The question of whether athletics will continue to be funded remains up in the air.

Martin Luther King and Germantown High Schools

- ❖ Germantown is a historically significant community. Founded in 1681, it was the birthplace of the antislavery movement, the site of a Revolutionary War battle, and the temporary residence of George Washington.
- ❖ Germantown High School opened its doors in 1914, and closed in 2013, just a year shy of its 100th anniversary.
- ❖ When King opened in 1972, it was paired with Germantown. 9th and 10th graders went to King; 11th and 12th graders to Germantown. The experiment lasted 4 years, and when the schools split, a rivalry was born. Some 40 years later, budget cuts have caused them to merge once more.
- ❖ After years on the list, King is no longer one of the persistently dangerous schools in Philadelphia.
- ❖ When King and Germantown merged this year, the Cougars football team had not won a game in two years, except by forfeit.
- ❖ Coach Dunn is the third African American head coach to win a Philadelphia Public League Championship. The first was Germantown head coach Charles Hicks in 1982.

Sports

- ❖ Student athletes are four times more likely to attend college than non-athletes.
- ❖ In just the past two years, more than \$3.5 billion has been cut from sports programs in public schools.
- ❖ Today, 60% of children must pay a fee to play sports, primarily in low-income areas.
- ❖ It’s predicted that within 5 years, close to a third of US public schools will be without sports programs.
- ❖ Students who do not play sports or participate in other extracurricular activities are 57% more likely to drop out of high school. For disadvantaged youth, the influence of sports on school retention is even more profound.

Director's Statement

As a lifelong New Yorker, my view of Philadelphia didn't extend far beyond Ben Franklin and the Liberty Bell. Despite living an hour and a half away, I knew more about the city's historic past than its present.

Then I found the story of Martin Luther King and Germantown high schools, and the crisis facing Philadelphia public schools. I'd seen a similar crisis in New York City during my time as a parent and as a counselor for families and young people. After moving to Philadelphia and spending four months filming there, I found the situation to be more challenging and urgent than anything I'd witnessed before.

When budgets are cut, extracurricular activities like sports, music, and art seem to be first to go—as if these are somehow less essential. The reality is that these are often the very programs that make kids want to go to school, that build their confidence and pride. Without them, what is left? We all know that for the best of the best, sports can offer fully funded college education and new opportunities. Yet sports offer participate invaluable life lessons about teamwork, dedication, winning, and losing. This less tangible impact of sports is what impressed me most during my time with the Cougars. I know they will carry their motto, *humble, hungry, and hardworking*, through football seasons and throughout their lives.

During my time in Philadelphia, I found more than faceless crisis or the sensationalistic view afforded by mass media. I found individuals who actively and tirelessly work for the benefit of young people every single day—who fight the good fight with too many obstacles and too few resources. I found young people in difficult circumstances trying to find their way out through sports and saw the transformative effect that people who care, sports, and teamwork can have on their lives. This is worth fighting for. Every aspect of public education in our urban communities is on uncertain ground today and we cannot look away.

I hope you see what I see: people like people everywhere, rising to face challenges and beat the odds with grace and humor. Let's all remember: we could be King.

--Judd Ehrlich

About the Subjects

Ed Dunn: Cougars Head Coach Ed Dunn grew up and lives just blocks from King. He left a well-paid job in marketing in order to give back to his community. At just 27 years old, he was chosen to lead the merger of the Germantown and King football teams. Coach Dunn is a coach, mentor, brother, friend, and father to the young men on his team—passionate about their success on and off the field.

William Wade: A lifelong educator, during Principal Wade's three-year tenure, King has been taken off of the list of persistently dangerous schools. He is deeply committed to student success and to changing the negative perception of the school in the larger community.

Dontae Angus: As a 330 lb, 6'6" defensive tackle, Dontae has great prospects to play in college, but his academic struggles might destroy his chances. Without football, there is no way he can attend college. If he goes to the NFL, he has the ability to change his entire family's life and circumstances.

Salvatore "Sal" Henderson: Sal is a wildly talented athlete and charismatic young man that everyone likes. But he has never had it easy: childhood abuse and foster care have left their scars. He starts out the season full of potential—and then spends a month in jail and months on house arrest because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is only 16 years old.

Joseph Walker: Cougars Quarterback Joe is a star athlete who has been playing football his whole life. He has a supportive family who never miss his games, and we see the positive impact this has. In addition to making huge plays in every game, Joe consistently steps up as a leader for his teammates.

Mickey Grace: Mickey was the first girl in Philadelphia to play high school football, for the Germantown Bears. Now in college, she is a volunteer assistant coach for the Cougars – a team that combines her alma mater and former rival. More importantly, she is a strong role model for the boys on the team.

Sharrif Floyd: Sharrif came out of the Philadelphia public school system and has gone on to a great career in the NFL: a first round draft pick with the Minnesota Vikings. He is a hero to young athletes across Philadelphia—particularly to Dontae—to whom he acts as a mentor and inspiration.

Kelly Cottle: Coach Kelly owns his own business and volunteers his time as a coach. He is passionate about ensuring that players get into college, and focuses his time making highlight reels and meeting with recruiters around the country to make this happen.

Robert Coleman: In 1975, Robert Coleman played football for the Germantown Bears. Today, he is Athletic Director for the School District of Philadelphia. He

speaks openly about the challenges facing the Philadelphia public school system and encourages the Cougars throughout their groundbreaking season.

Dr. William Hite: Dr. Hite is Superintendent of Philadelphia public schools and head of the School Reform Commission, which controversially supported the recent budget cuts and school closures. He has been at the center of the firestorm over the closures and budget uncertainty—including the issue of funding for athletics.

Pastor Alyn Waller: Pastor Waller is a lion in the community, leading a congregation with over 20,000 members at the local Enon Tabernacle Church and serving as volunteer wrestling coach at King. Principal Wade and many families of our players are members of his church, which donated funds to support King's music program after the budget cuts.

About the Filmmakers

Judd Ehrlich (Director/Producer)

Judd Ehrlich grew up in New York City in the shadow of the Flatiron Building. From an early age, he gravitated towards storytelling, and at fourteen, was the youngest feature reporter at a New York newspaper.

No stranger to big city sports stories; Ehrlich directed and produced the Emmy-nominated documentary RUN FOR YOUR LIFE about the NYC Marathon. The film premiered to critical acclaim at the Tribeca Film Festival, released theatrically and broadcasts annually on ESPN. Ehrlich was also nominated for an Emmy for his PBS documentary MAYOR OF THE WEST SIDE about a teenage local celebrity growing up with multiple disabilities. Ehrlich released his third award-winning film, MAGIC CAMP, which was recently optioned for a narrative adaptation. His forthcoming SCIENCE FICTION LAND tells the true story behind ARGO.

Before film, Ehrlich worked for years as a counselor and caseworker in NYC with homeless families, people with mental illness and developmentally disabled teens at Project Renewal, Homes for the Homeless and YAI. He later collaborated on the editing of Ric Burns' Emmy-winning NEW YORK and Macky Alston's Sundance winner, FAMILY NAME. He edited for CBS News and worked for the PBS series POV. Ehrlich created and curated multiple groundbreaking film series throughout NYC hosting notables such as Darren Aronofsky, Steve Buscemi, Tony Kushner, Cyndi Lauper and Willem Dafoe. He is a graduate of Vassar and teaches filmmaking.

Ehrlich moved back to his ancestral homeland of Flatbush, where one of his relatives ran a movie theater. His two children are fifth-generation residents of the neighborhood that was home to the pioneering Vitagraph Studios.

Ruchi Mital (Producer)

Ruchi Mital is a filmmaker, producer, writer, and fundraiser with a social justice background. She spent a decade working on issues of homelessness and violence prevention and is committed to fostering new ideas and understanding through creative storytelling, sound, and image. WE COULD BE KING is her first feature. Ruchi is currently producing Flatbush Pictures' forthcoming hybrid documentary, SCIENCE FICTION LAND. Her short films have screened at festivals globally and she recently published a chapter in the critical anthology, *Michael Jackson: Grasping the Spectacle*. She spends her time outside of Flatbush Pictures making super 8 movies and recording the sounds of the city. Ruchi is a graduate of New York University and the Media Studies Masters program at The New School. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Caitlin Mae Burke (Producer)

Caitlin Mae Burke is a film and television producer, director, and general enthusiast. After attending Vassar College and Prague Film School Caitlin began her career in non-fiction television. Her credits include four seasons as a producer

on Discovery Health's MYSTERY DIAGNOSIS, and three seasons directing TLC's FOUR WEDDINGS. She also assisted the producers of BRICK CITY, the Emmy nominated, Peabody Award Winning documentary series. This summer, Caitlin refocused on film when she moved to Philadelphia to produce WE COULD BE KING. She also co-produced APPROACHING THE ELEPHANT (dir. Amanda Wilder), which premiered with critical acclaim at True/False 2014 and is making its festival rounds. Caitlin is currently producing NUTS! the second feature from director Penny Lane (OUR NIXON), MUCK, a narrative short film, as well as a true crime show for Discovery ID. She lives in Brooklyn.

Credits

Directed & Produced by
Judd Ehrlich

Editors
David Lieberman
Chris Iversen

Director of Photography
Peter Eliot Buntaine

Producers
Caitlin Mae Burke
Ruchi Mital

Executive Producers
Ed Stack
Lauren Hobart
Ryan Eckel
Gary Krieg

Supervising Producer
Michelle R. Carney

Executive in Charge of Production for Tribeca
Matt Spangler

Music by
Khari Mateen

Location Sound Mixer
Michael McMenomy

Sound Mixer
Wil Masisak

Supervising Sound Editors
Michael McMenomy
Jeff Seelye

Sound Effects Editor
Sean Garnhart

Sound Editor
Kate Bilinski

Associate Producer
Sarah Jacobson

Associate Editors

Sophia Pike Betz
Max Powers

First Assistant Editor

Ian Johnson

Assistant Editors

Elif Alp
Charles D'Alessio
John Michael Kehoe III
Robert Raymond
Sierra Soto

Editing Intern

Son Duong

Consulting Editor

Robert Greene

Additional Editor

Chris White

Post Production Supervisor

Dan Gilbert

Title Design

Nicholas Vranizan

Effects Artists

Nate DeYoung
Jason Stroud

Colorist

Stewart Griffin

Post Production Facility

Final Frame

Audio Post Facility

Dig It Audio

Field Coordinators

Jon Read
Christopher Fenech

Additional Camera Operators

Brian Kyle Atkins
John Baumgarter
J. Adam Bogus
Larry Bossone

Michael Flanagan
Jesse Groening
Kevin Hackenberg
Joe Hennigan
Jeremiah Hines
Frank A Lazar
Nicholas Moo
Geoffrey Nichols
Anthony Orsino
Todd Rawiszer
Benjamin G. Rode
Darryl Rode
B.J. Schmidt
Geoff Shelton
Will Taylor
Candace Thomson
Sean Price Williams

Additional Sound

Paul Alfe
Jason Clee
Parker J. Colt
Max Cooke
Douglas Horvat

Vocals

Tess Henley

Guitar

Joe Baldacci

Production Assistants

Maureen Costello
Greg Gant
Ian James Gundry
Kevin Howley
Frank T Lazar
Stephen Litten
Walter Palmer
Bill West

Archival Researchers

Alex Bartlett
Ben David
Ben Herold
John Hesdon
John Pettit

Intern

Max Blumenthal

Archival Material Courtesy Of

Comcast
Germantown Historical Society/Germantown Courier
WHYY/NewsWorks.org
NPR
Philadelphia Daily News
Philadelphia Inquirer
The Evening Bulletin
Urban Archives at Temple University
WBUR 90.9 Boston
WKYW-TV

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Accounting for Tribeca

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Maria Adler

Legal For Flatbush Pictures

Donaldson + Califf

Legal for Tribeca

For Tribeca Jessica Nickelsberg

Additional Production Services

Get-Kinetic, Inc.
Bowstring
Keystone Pictures

Featuring

Dontae Angus
Ed Dunn
Mickey Grace
Sharrif Floyd
Salvatore Henderson
William Wade
Joseph Walker

With

Robert Coleman
Kelly Cottle

Brittany Gouche
Rob & Yvette Henderson
Pastor Alyn Waller
Jounieta Williams

THE 2013-2014 MARTIN LUTHER KING COUGARS

Devon Aaron
Amir Blaylock
Gregory Alexander
Jordan Alexander
Nasir Boykin
James Brewer
Damon Brinkley
Nicko Bryant
Emmanuel Clark
Frank Darden
Ishmael Dargan
Meshark Davies
Walter Dickerson
Tykeem Ford
Marquis Forman
Jayni Harris
Delane Hart
Muhammad Hasan
Devonte Hunter
Darius Hurst-Rodney
Terrence Irby
Brendan Jackson
Garvin Jowers
Michael Lynch
Edward Marshall
Mark McCray
Maurice McCray
Emili Medley
Derrick Morton
Alex Nabried
Artise Nelson
Raheim Paige
Quadair "Gooch" Pierce
Ludin Rattigan
Kareem Robinson
Nate Sertain
Rahue Stennett
Aaron Watkins
Vincent D. White
Quran Tisdale
Tileem Yates

COACHES

Mike Barbarito
Jonathan Hoffmeier

James Humphreys
Devon Johnson
Jared Johnson
Damon Linder
Will McLeod
Earl Morgan Jr.
Kevin Norris
Eric Lee

TEAM MANAGERS:

Diamond Mitchell
Ashley Tinsley
Gabrielle Turner
Shagrana Caesar

Also Featuring

Rep. Cindy Bass
Alysha Boone
Carlos Bradley
Sean Colson
Angela Crawford
Kevin Costas
Jennifer Downey
Edward Dunn, Jr.
Susan Grick
John Gurevitch
Dr. William Hite
Calvin Johnson
Stacy Johnson
Raymond Jones
Rep. Stephen Kinsey
George P. Kocotis III
Mike Lacett
Kevin Reilly
Lewis B McCants, Jr.

Special Thanks

*The Staff and Students of Martin Luther King High School
The City of Philadelphia
School District of Philadelphia*

*Agoraphone
Iddo Arad
Rep. Cindy Bass
Margaret Bavwidinsi-Mullen
Carlos Bradley
The Breakfast Boutique
The Brinkley Family*

*Jason Burke
Rona Burke
Mark Byers
Portia Carpenter
Julia Etta Carter
Victoria Chan
Dean Cheley
The Clark Family
Robert Coleman
Steve Devlin
The Dunn Family
The Ehrlich Family
Bennett Elliott
Rep. Dwight Evans
Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church
D. Fleming
Sharrif Floyd
Golden Crust Pizza
Rowland Gibson
Russell Golden, Jr.
Geraldine Green
Helen Gym
The Grace Family
Green Soul
The Hart Family
Michael Hearst
The Henderson Family
Brian Hickey
Charles Hicks
Dr. William Hite
Imhotep Charter High School
Calvin Johnson
M. Amanda Johnson
Evette Jones
Rep. Stephen Kinsey
Brendan Ledesma
Jasmine Lee
Tony Lee
Chris Lehmann
Katie Martin and the Mayor's Office
Michelle Mason
Barbara Melsch
Tonya Merke
Emily Mirksy
The Mital Family
Bill Newman
Andre Noble
The Honorable Michael Nutter
Alison Ogden
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
Philly Coalition Advocating for Public Schools*

*Elizabeth Pauker
Vera Peoples-Primus
Nancy Schafer
Jacob Schwartz
Ted Silary
Rama and Luke Smith
The Smore Family
The Wade Family
The Walker Family
Mama Chris Wiggins
Jounieta Williams and Family
Marcia Willis*

*Nancy Schafer
Joe Schmidt
Elizabeth Baran
Frank Igrec
David Mossé
Mark Rooks
Alex Tomey
Andre Hawaux
Joe Oliver
Briana Nowell
Carisa Sirak
Colleen Wilson
Jennifer Moreau
Krista Gianantonio
Kathryn Alland
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Nicholas Youngman*

*Jon Patricof
Jackie Hassell
Greg Sheps
Todd Green
Kyle Ferrara*