

The Language of Film

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Film: Gazza – The Definitive True Story

Director: Sam Collins

Stars: Paul Gascoigne

Genre: Documentary, Sport

Run time: 1hr 19min

Rated: 15

Rating: 4/5

Gazza – The Definitive True Story



This 'definitive true story' of Paul Gascoigne, traces Gazza's past giving a flavour of his **meteoric rise** to footballing stardom. From his humble upbringing in Newcastle making his 1st team debut at 17 years old to breaking British football transfer history signing for Tottenham and then becoming one of the world's richest players signing for Lazio. It follows all the well documented highs and lows of his career but what's different about this documentary is that it zooms in on his off field distractions, in particular looking at his moneymaking celebrity ambitions. The subsequent **media frenzy**, he both sort and was a victim of, would have a major impact on his career, alongside his battles with alcoholism, eating disorders and mental health.

This documentary uses only archive footage assembling together Gazza's story using the clips and interviews from a range of **football pundits** and family that are **uncannily** prophetic. Interestingly, there is a mini **serialisation** of the tabloid media at that time, particularly the Sun and the Mirror, who would forge a revelatory partnership with Gazza and his then wife Sheryl Gascoigne that became devastatingly toxic. As Gazza's life **unravels** in the glare of the media spotlight he is centre stage during the celebrity lad culture of the 90s, something he **epitomised**

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with his **outlandish** style of play, drinking antics and practical jokes, but would ultimately lead to his self-combustion.

There is no doubting Gazza's place in football history, a unique player who finally broke the mould of English playmakers to shine on the world's biggest footballing stage. Greater than all the **hyperbole**, sadly both on and off the field, this documentary pieces together the post-match analysis with surgical precision (of which there is some uncomfortable viewing) in this ultimate case study on the **perils** of becoming a world class footballer living in the public eye.

Similar films:

Senna (2010); Dir: Asif Kapadia; Stars: Ayrton Senna

Marley (2012); Dir: Kevin Macdonald; Stars: Bob Marley

Exercises:

A. Questions True or False:

1. Gazza became a top professional footballer at a young age? T/F?
2. Gazza tried to keep away from any media attention? T/F?
3. The documentary includes lots of new videos and interviews? T/F?
4. Gazza was a central figure of the 90s lad culture? T/F?
5. His bad boy behaviour badly impacted on his career? T/F?
6. Being a professional footballer is a safe career choice? T/F?

B. Vocabulary / Phrases Match

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. meteoric rise | a. dangers |
| 2. media frenzy | b. mysteriously |
| 3. football pundits | c. continuous reports |
| 4. uncannily | d. exaggeration |
| 5. serialisation | e. fast advancement |
| 6. unravels | f. comes apart |
| 7. epitomised | g. unconventional |
| 8. outlandish | h. football presenters |
| 9. hyperbole | i. personified |
| 10. perils | j. intense publicity |

C. Discussion Questions:

1. What can you see in the picture?
2. What famous footballers do you know?
3. Do you think footballers (or celebrities) get badly treated by the media?
4. What do you think about 90s lad culture?
5. Would you want to be famous? Why / why not?

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D. Pronunciation & Listening Exercise:

a. Listen & practise your pronunciation (see webpage for download links).

1. Giving a flavour of his meteoric rise to footballing stardom.
2. Interestingly, there is a mini serialisation of the tabloid media at that time.
3. In this ultimate case study on the perils of becoming a world class footballer.

b. Listen to the text and fill the missing gaps (see text below).

(see webpage for download links)

E. Writing tasks:

1. Write an essay about the relationship between sports stars and the media. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

[illegible]

Answers:

A. True or False Questions:

1. T 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F

B. Vocabulary Definitions:

1e, 2j, 3h, 4b, 5c, 6f, 7i, 8g, 9d, 10a

C. Listening Gap Fill

1. humble 2. career 3. archive 4. toxic 5. stage

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Listening Gap Fill

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This documentary uses only 3. _____ footage assembling together Gazza's story using the clips and interviews from a range of football pundits and family that are uncannily prophetic. Interestingly, there is a mini serialisation of the tabloid media at that time, particularly the Sun and the Mirror, who would forge a revelatory partnership with Gazza and his then wife Sheryl Gascoigne that became devastatingly 4. _____. As Gazza's life unravels in the glare of the media spotlight he is centre stage during the celebrity lad culture of the 90s, something he epitomised with his outlandish style of play, drinking antics and practical jokes, but would ultimately lead to his self-combustion.

There is no doubting Gazza's place in football history, a unique player who finally broke the mould of English playmakers to shine on the world's biggest footballing 5. _____. Greater than all the hyperbole, sadly both on and off the field, this documentary pieces together the post-match analysis with surgical precision (of which there is some uncomfortable viewing) in this ultimate case study on the perils of becoming a world class footballer living in the public eye.