

# November 1: THE WARRIORS

Contributed by BobsBarbs

Can you dig it? Directed by Walter Hill (streets of fire). Cyrus, the messianic leader of the largest gang in New York, declares a truce and calls a summit with all the major gangs in attendance. During the meeting, he expresses his wish to unify all the gangs into one large super-gang. During the summit, Cyrus is assassinated and the murder is pinned on a member of a gang known as the Warriors. Now, all the other gangs are hunting the Warriors down before they can prove their innocence.

"Warriors, come out to play-i-ay." Since its initial lukewarm reception back in 1979, The Warriors slowly garnered a cult following. Now, it is perhaps only third in line behind The Rocky Horror Picture Show and Scarface in terms of the number of minions; The Warriors has finally, and rightfully so, earned its place in the upper pantheon of great cult cinema. Some twenty-odd years ago it was still talked about in hushed tones, as many were either embarrassed to admit its campy appeal, or ill-prepared to defend its very serious point of view. Over the years I've discovered that very few people enjoy the film for both reasons — it's mostly either one or the other. The over-the-top performances, and at many times, campy costumes and dialogue are continually watchable. However, the all-too genuine locations and real-gang extras give the film an authentic feel. The Warriors is the only cult film I can think of that as I watch it, and enjoy the silly things about it, I often wonder if it's also very true-to-life. Well, this film and maybe Showgirls.

The Warriors is based on the book of the same name by Sol Yurick, which in turn was based on the Greek epic Anabasis, written by Xenophon in the 4th-century BC. Although now, instead of the long, arduous and adventurous trek home by Greek mercenaries stuck in enemy Persian territory after their leader Cyrus was slain, we have a gang called The Warriors, who are framed for the murder of big-time gang-leader Cyrus, who was attempting to unite all the gangs into a single, solid conglomerate. Now The Warriors are wanted dead by every other gang in town. They're in The Bronx. They have to get back to their home territory in Coney Island. The subway is too dangerous; too likely the way. Enemy gangs would be waiting for them there. By foot, in the shadows of the city, is the safest but longest way home. For those of you who don't know New York City very well, from The Bronx to Coney Island by foot is a very, very, very long distance, and without coming across another gang, almost impossible. Imagine trying to walk all the way from Sausalito to Pacifica without getting asked for change. Exactly...impossible. Cyrus's plan to unite is not welcomed by some. In particular Luther, head of rival gang The Rogues. He frames the Warriors for Cyrus's murder, and the Grammercy Riffs, another rival gang, enact revenge by killing The Warrior's leader, Cleon. As the police arrive, the other eight members of The Warriors escape, unable to plea innocence before their peers. All they can do is get home and sit tight until the opportunity to seek vengeance is right. But can they get home? Swan, the new leader, is threatened not just from the outside world, but also from within their own gang, as hotheaded Warrior Ajax also desires to be the leader. During their adventure they pick up a wild girl named Mercy. Who is she really? Can she be trusted? Every other gang is after them: The Orphans, The Turnbull ACs, The Furies, The Punks. Even the local DJ is out to get them, informing everyone listening that The Warriors are now bad news. Will they escape the claws of the dangerous all-girl gang, The Lizzies? Will The Riffs realize in time that The Warriors are really innocent and come to intercede on their behalf? I guess you'll just have to come down to the Clay Theatre and find out the answers yourself. Can you dig it? -Bobs Barbs An Incomplete List of New York City Gangs it Might Be Fun to Come Dressed up as When You Come to See The Warriors. We know you're coming! \* The Turnbull A.C.s: (Also going by the names Turnbolls, Bulls, or A.C.s) A bus-riding skinhead gang. They travel in large numbers and wear denim jackets and blue jeans. A notable member is the wheelchair bound Birdie who appears in the game and whom the Warriors kill. Their turf is Pelham and the area surrounding Gun Hill Road.

\* The Orphans: A low-tier gang (who weren't invited to Cyrus's parley, nor did they even know about it) that according to the videogame's manual is the weakest in the city. In the movie they are said to number about thirty, although in the videogame a sub-objective in their level is to beat up at least forty. They wear green shirts with "ORPHANS" stitched into the back, and blue jeans. Their turf is Tremont. Their leader, Sully, is a coward, with a weakness for flattery. In the game, the Warriors trash Sully's car after he spreads false rumors about having defeated them.

\* The Baseball Furies: (or simply The Furies) A gang in pinstriped baseball uniforms, wielding baseball bats and wearing facial makeup similar to that of the rock group KISS, only multicolored instead of black and white. Most members wear gray uniforms with black stripes, and a few wear black uniforms with gray stripes. In the film, they are at first an intimidating menace chasing the Warriors, but are easily defeated by the Warriors in Riverside Park; "A bunch of wimps", as Ajax put it. The Furies were created because of Walter Hill's love for baseball. Along with the Warriors themselves, the Baseball Furies are the most popular gang with fans of the movie. In Greek mythology, the Furies were the embodiment of vengeance. Their leader, seen in the video game, is named Cobb (after Ty Cobb) and dressed like a catcher, with The Misfits skull motif on his mask. He wields two baseball bats tied together. According to the game manual, they are the most feared gang in New York. Their turf is Riverside.

\* The Lizzies: An all-female gang (possibly lesbian—the gang name is the pejorative, possibly misspelled, for a lesbian; two members are also seen dancing suggestively together in the movie; the name may double as a reference to Lizzie Borden). At first they appear non-threatening, but the opposite is soon learned as they try to trap three of the Warriors and attempt to kill them. Their turf is the Bowery.

\* The Punks: A gang with a leader who strolls around on rollerskates. The Warriors fight them in a men's room in Union Square station. Each member wears denim overalls over a different-colored striped shirt. The Punks are never named

during the movie (except for being referred to by their name in the credits), but are named in the game. They share the Bowery with The Lizzies.

\* The Rogues: The gang that framed the Warriors for Cyrus's assassination. The regular gang members wear black shirts, black leather jackets, black pants, and black leather hats. The gang leader (although the movie doesn't mention him as leader), Luther, wears a gray shirt, a gray zip-up hoodie, a black leather vest, a sheriff's badge, black leather pants, and a faded pink-ish headband. He also seems to display violent psychopathic tendencies, though he is something of a coward. In the game, it is revealed that Luther got his badge and gun from a cop that the Rogues killed. Although they are dangerous, they do not seem too bright. Their turf is Hell's Kitchen, but they are often seen outside of their turf.

\* The Gramercy Riffs: A well-organized gang from around Gramercy Park, said to be the biggest gang in the city. Cyrus was the leader of this gang before he was assassinated. After his death, the second in command, Masai, takes over. They are dressed in martial arts robes and pants but at the end of the film are seen wearing black t-shirts and black denim pants. (any gangs from the video game are OK with us, but purists may object).