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WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW

BILLY RAFTERY
 CHILDREN RISE FOUNDATION

Billy Raftery, the 28-year-old director of *Give Us This Day*—a feature-length documentary about homeless children in Durban, South Africa -- describes Durban's Point Road district, the hub of the city's burgeoning street kid problem, as a cross between *Peter Pan* and *Oliver Twist*. "There's a lawlessness side that's right out of Neverland," says Raftery, a Columbia University graduate, "and another side where gang members are the pirates and the kids stay high on glue all day and all night, just to stay alert so the bad guys can't get them." But this is no J.M. Barrie or Dickens tale. In addition to drug addictions, many of the thousands of Durban homeless children have AIDS and are forced to prostitute themselves and fight with knives to stay afloat.

Raftery was the only person involved in the creation of *Give Us This Day*, which took five years to make, who hadn't lived on the streets; his Durban production staff was made up entirely of former street kids. Along with employing homeless children and documenting their lives, Raftery also helps them get off the streets -- the nonprofit he established, the Children Rise Foundation, found safe homes for about 500 Durban kids last year. **Derek Loosvelt**

www.childrenrise.com

Photograph by Christopher Dibble

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