

HELLHOUNDS

(God sees everything)

Written by David Hamilton

Based on actual events.

A rock band of young stoners are arrested in early 70's Mississippi and are horrified by the harsh realities of institutional racism and corruption. One of them returns forty years later to discover that not much has really changed.

It's Dazed and Confused meets The Shawshank Redemption.

In 1973, 18-year-old Dan Harris is a high school student living with his parents on an Air Force Base in Gosnell, Arkansas. He's in a band with three other guys: Angel Torres is in the Air Force and plays guitar. Robbie Alexander works construction and plays drums. Blue Lewis is also in high school and plays bass. Blue, having been caught smoking pot by his parents, gets sent to a youth facility in Mississippi for six months. He takes his bass amplifier with him but can't bring it back when he returns to Gosnell because there's no room for it in his mother's car. They devise a plan to take Angel's van and retrieve it. Dan decides to bring some pot to try and sell to the kids at the free school. They drive to Crystal Springs, Mississippi, and on the way they pick up Gary, a hitchhiker. After retrieving the amp they're headed out of Crystal Springs when they're stopped by a sheriff's deputy who illegally searches the van and finds the pot. They're all arrested and booked into the Copiah County jail in Hazlehurst, Mississippi.

Over the next five weeks in jail, Dan sees the brutal ugliness of institutional racism and old Southern power structures. He witnesses beatings, corruption, and nepotism.

By various means and methods, each of them is eventually released and allowed to return home.

Dan goes on to become a professional touring musician and forty years later, he has a day off in Jackson, Mississippi. He rents a car and drives to Hazlehurst where he sees firsthand the sad truth that "the more things change, the more they stay the same"...

HELLHOUNDS is a story of lost innocence and the major cultural differences that still exist in America. It's about being confronted by white privilege, the slow collapse of rural America, the corruption and militarization of police, and the misplaced priorities of the drug war. With an eye toward compassion, it presents the stark realization that while national culture may have shifted over the past fifty years, local power structures remain largely unchanged.