

Film Review: Spike Lee Returns to Brooklyn in 'Red Hook Summer'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 24, 2012 - 1:06pm

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CHICAGO – “*I ain't pawning my responsibility off as a parent and saying she's in God's hands.*” What a powerful line. The idea that religion has been used as a crutch, an excuse for communities who preach that God will save their young ones when they need to do their part is a passionate and powerful one. And we all know that Spike Lee does his best work when he's inspired by powerful ideas. “Red Hook Summer,” the controversial director's controversial latest features Lee playing with fascinating concepts and working well with setting even if the final result isn't quite the sum of its parts.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Flik Royale (newcomer Jules Brown) has been sent from Atlanta to Red Hook, Brooklyn to live with his preacher grandfather Da Good Bishop Enoch Rouse (Clarke Peters of “The Wire”). Flik immediately butts head with his passionate relative, one who calls him out in front of his entire congregation as a kid who needs God. Flik doesn't think he needs God. He's got his iPad2, which he carries around to chronicle his summer spent in Red Hook and it helps him keep an emotional distance from the people there. As time goes by, Flik falls for a girl named Chazz (Toni Lysaith) and draws closer to the sermons of his preacher relative.



[Read Brian Tallerico's full review of "Red Hook Summer" in our reviews section.](#) [15]

Spike Lee knows Brooklyn. “Red Hook Summer” is his sixth film set in the New York borough after “She's Gotta Have It,” “Do the Right Thing,” “Crooklyn,” “Clockers,” and “He Got Game.” Considering how high most of those films would rank on anyone's list of Lee's best work to date, it's undeniably a setting that brings out the best in his filmmaking abilities. Just the way he shoots Red Hook brings this community to life. I loved the casual moments of “Red Hook Summer,” the scenes of Flik moving around an area of the world that feels nearly alien to a kid from Atlanta. Lee loves Brooklyn and even makes an appearance as his character from “Right Thing,” Mookie, who bafflingly is still delivering pizzas for Sal.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico's full "Red Hook Summer" review.](#) [15]

“Red Hook Summer” stars Jules Brown, Clarke Peters, Toni Lysaith, Nate Parker, Thomas Jefferson Byrd, Jonathan Batiste, Heather Simms, and Isiah Whitlock Jr. It was written by Spike Lee & James McBride and directed by Lee. It opens in Chicago on August 24, 2012.



Red Hook Summer

Photo credit: Variance

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