



In pre-DVD times (a.k.a. the Good Old Days) Castle Films released an edited 8mm version of *Son of Kong* for home viewing. The artwork of Kiko on the box appears to have been copied from the poster for 1949's *Mighty Joe Young* and ignored Kiko's white coloration.

did in *Godzilla vs. Kong*. The Kong-scale simian truly does look and behave like a full-grown Kiko when he isn't in an induced berserker rage. (The 1986 "Rampage" arcade videogame also featured "Lizzie," a Godzilla homage.) George was made albino for the film version to distinguish him from Kong.

Kiko's pale appearance gave him a softer, vulnerable and even symbolically purer countenance than his untamed darker father. His features and expressions were softened as well, often portrayed as curious or comical. Along with these features, he was friendly, and more gorilla-like, which made him a direct prototype for the next major cinematic enormous ape, "Mr. Joseph Young" of Africa.

The old *King Kong* dream team reunited once more to create 1949's *Mighty Joe Young*. Cooper and Schoedsack once again sent Armstrong on a safari to exotic locales where he discovers yet another giant ape, a friendly ten-foot gorilla. O'Brien also returned, with prodigy protégé Ray Harryhausen, armed with advanced techniques that allowed them to animate more expressive emotions and behaviors than with Kong, which helped win O'Brien his only Academy Award.

The old Kong clique seemed to want to redeem themselves for "murdering" the father and son grand great apes by devising a decidedly more upbeat variation on the theme, aimed at postwar audiences seeking escapist family fun. They employed the same basic

premise as *King Kong*, bringing a giant simian to America for exhibition, but this time as an invited paid guest performer (along with his charming and feisty sisterly teenage blonde companion) rather than as a violent abducted captive. Ultimately the deed was no less exploitative, resulting in an obligatory rampage and a fiery climax that nearly ends in tragedy, but luckily offers a happy ending for everyone.

Teary-eyed viewers truly worry for the kind and noble Joe when he nearly dies saving kids from a burning orphanage. (I've always assumed S.E. Hinton must have been emotion-

ally impacted by that movie as a child and crafted a nearly identical climax for the novel/script *The Outsiders*, written in her teens, albeit adding a tragic death to the finale.)

Interestingly, both Kiko and Joe share basic dimensions and presumed intelligence with the real-life prehistoric *Gigantopithecus*, a Cenozoic bipedal ape that remarkably exceeded ten-foot-tall and twelve-hundred pounds. There were likely other as-yet-undiscovered giant apes, perhaps much larger!

Surprisingly, there has been only one known albino gorilla in the real world, a Western Lowland gorilla named

Snowflake, who spent the four decades of his life in Spain's Barcelona Zoo until his death in 2003. His earlier names included Nfumu Ngui ("white gorilla") and Floquet de Neu ("little snowflake"). He was the March 1967 cover story of *National Geographic* and was featured in a 2011 fictionalized movie. Actor Dwayne Johnson stated the movie version of George in *Rampage* was based on Snowflake.

People *rightly* forget that the 1976 *King Kong* remake had its own far more horrible, beyond-campy sequel, creat-



George of 2018's *Rampage* is a direct filmic descendent of Kiko.