

Perfect Dog Pictures presents

A Film by Corey Sherman

BIG BOYS



2023 | USA | 88 min | Color | Narrative

FESTIVAL PRESS KIT

World Premiere

2023 BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival

U.S. Premiere

2023 Boston Wicked Queer Film Festival - Opening Night

Winner: Audience Award

Winner: Special Recognition Award - Lead Actor Isaac Krasner

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SELECT PRESS

“The writer-director’s personal experience is threaded through every scene of a well-acted movie that’s sure to be a modest crowd-pleaser at LGBTQ festivals and could also land streamer exposure. The kind of young queer audiences who made Netflix’s *Heartstoppers* a hit should gravitate to this highly specific but relatable story, which will speak most directly to awkward-age boys struggling to see how their hefty frames might fit into a gay landscape that so idealizes the Adonis model of physical beauty.”

-The Hollywood Reporter

An achingly brilliant queer coming-of-age classic.

-The Guardian

An instant crowd pleaser, *Big Boys* is heartwarming and sweetly comedic.

-Attitude

Isaac Krasner delivers a sublime breakout performance as a lovestruck teen in Corey Sherman’s restrained but magical debut.

-The Guardian

A sensitive coming-of-age drama, which relies heavily on the significant appeal of emerging lead actor Isaac Krasner.

-Screen

In its 16-year-old lead actor, Isaac Krasner, the film boasts a star and a breakthrough performance reminiscent of Jason Schwartzman in *Rushmore*.

-The Guardian

A 14-year-old boy navigates his burgeoning sexuality in this sensitive coming-of-age drama, which relies heavily on the significant appeal of emerging lead actor Isaac Krasner. He anchors this small-scale story in authentic, often painfully raw — but never oversold — adolescent emotion, embodying the vulnerability and fear of a character on the cusp of life-changing realizations. Making its debut in BFI Flare, *Big Boys* should be received with warmth by an LGBTQ+ audience, and should strike a chord with anyone who can identify with these first tentative steps to embracing one’s true self.

-Screen

Delicate, unique and subtly magical... An achingly brilliant queer coming-of-age classic.

-The Guardian

Featuring Gus Bendinelli’s luminous cinematography to an ethereal score by Baths (aka Will Wiesenfeld) that is layered with surging voices.

-The Guardian

Big Boys is a touching comedy exploring coming of age whilst also coming to terms with your sexuality. It was a joy to join these characters on their camping trip and it leaves you with a smile, feeling like you’ve also just been on holiday for the past hour and a half.

-D&C Film

Isaac Krasner is perfectly nuanced...absolutely perfect.

-G Scene

Writer/director Corey Sherman has created a plus-size comedy of adolescent awkwardness that will make you cringe and smile over and over again.

-G Scene

LOG LINE

A teenage boy's unexpected crush turns a camping trip into a weekend of self-discovery in this heartwarming coming-of-age comedy.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Jamie's dream camping trip is ruined before it even begins when he finds out that his beloved cousin is bringing her new boyfriend. However, Jamie's initial jealousy of the competent and confident Dan quickly turns into a friendship as they bond over cooking, games and both being 'big boys'. But as the weekend progresses, despite Jamie's brother's attempts to set him up with a girl staying at the campsite, all Jamie wants to do is hang out with Dan. As his burgeoning crush gets him into awkward scrapes and arguments, Jamie begins to come to terms with who he is, and who he desires. Hilarious and heartwarming, *Big Boys* is the type of coming-of-age film we need more of in the world.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Jamie, 14, a precocious aspiring chef, prepares for a weekend camping trip with his brother, Will, 16, and beloved older cousin, Allie, 25. When he first learns Allie will be bringing her new boyfriend, Dan, 26, he is wary of losing time with her on the trip. Upon meeting Dan, Jamie is immediately intimidated by his physical strength and masculine capabilities. Jamie doesn't want to appear weak in front of Dan, and so tries to impress him by carrying heavy luggage and building a tent without instructions. His attempts backfire until finally, he finds something he's better than Dan at - cooking. Jamie shows him how to perfectly season hamburgers, a skill he learned in his advanced YMCA cooking class. After this, they develop a bond, and Jamie gets swept up in the ecstasy of the bromance. He wants to be Dan's *best* friend, but doesn't quite know why...

Later that night, Jamie's older brother, Will, steals Dan's whiskey and drags Jamie to meet up with two sisters from another campsite. Will leaves Jamie and Erika, the younger sister, alone to "hook up", but Jamie isn't interested so he pretends to be too drunk for any late night romance. Jamie wanders back to the campsite alone, where he runs into Dan peeing on the embers of the campfire. Jamie apologizes for stealing Dan's whiskey and Dan encourages him to stand up to Will more. Jamie retires to his tent where, despite his best efforts not to, he sexually fantasizes about Dan. This is the first time that he's ever let himself think this way about another man, and it's electrifying and terrifying at the same time. When Will returns to the tent later, Jamie lies that he and Erika hooked up.

In the morning, Will learns from Erika that Jamie lied about hooking up with her. Will insults Jamie and accuses him of being in love with Dan. Thinking he's following Dan's advice, Jamie fights back physically, but it backfires and Will punches him in the face. Jamie worries that Will might have given him a "concussion", but Dan tells him to suck it up and not be "such a baby". Thinking he's lost Dan's approval for good, Jamie retreats into himself. However, when the group reaches a fork in a hiking trail later that day, Allie and Will head back to camp, while Jamie seizes the opportunity to keep hiking with Dan and get back on his good side. However, their fun private time turns sour when they find themselves lost in the

woods. On their search for a way out, Jamie trips and cuts open his knee. Dan carefully tends to the wound by taking off his shirt and wrapping it around Jamie's leg. Caught up in the sudden intimacy of the moment, Jamie gets an erection. Dan spots it but tries to ignore it and move on. They find a riverbed, which leads them downhill and back to the campground.

Back at the campsite, Jamie breaks down in front of Allie. She comforts him and asks what's going on, but he can't bring himself to admit his feelings for Dan. Allie and Dan drop Jamie and Will off at home the next day, but before parting ways, Jamie asks to speak privately with Dan about what happened in the woods. Dan tries to brush it off like it was nothing, but Jamie insists that it wasn't nothing, and confesses to finding Dan very handsome. Dan is surprised, but accepts the confession graciously. They hug, and Jamie, feeling relieved and proud of himself, runs inside. Alone in his bedroom, he takes an appreciative look at his one memento from the trip - the t-shirt Dan wrapped around his leg, now stained with his blood.

PRINCIPAL CREW & CAST

Director/Writer	Corey Sherman
Producers	Allison Tate, Corey Sherman
Director of Photography	Gus Bendinelli
Editor	Erik Vogt-Nilsen, Corey Sherman
Production Designer	Rachel Scott
Composer	Will Wiesenfeld

Principal Cast

Jamie	Isaac Krasner
Allie	Dora Madison
Dan	David Johnson III
Will	Taj Cross
Nicole	Emily Deschanel
Erika	Marion Van Cuyck
Quinn	Emma Broz
Fantasy Jamie	Jack De Sanz

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Corey Sherman (Writer/Director/Producer)

We made a film about a young man's unrequited crush to shed light on this extremely common, yet under-examined aspect of queer life. In most romantic stories, the object of the protagonist's love eventually returns their affection. However, for many queer people like myself, growing up was full of unrequited crushes on straight or closeted peers. Yearning for someone we couldn't have was frustrating enough, but not seeing any exploration of that experience in the media made it feel like a lonely failure. However, these experiences are extremely common and can be profoundly impactful. We figure out how to make peace with not getting everything we want. We learn to put ourselves out there and be honest even in the face of imminent rejection. In Jamie's case, the intensity of his desire, though not reciprocated, allows him to face and accept his own sexuality.

Furthermore, these experiences aren't always complete downers. Like any other love story, they are full of funny, thrilling, and tender moments. We hope that viewers who can relate but have never seen their story on screen before may feel more celebrated and understood.

Much like I did at his age, Jamie internalizes toxic, homophobic ideas about what it means to be a man. He has only been exposed to a limited definition of masculinity, and fears that by being too obviously femme or queer, he will be perceived as less of a man. It's for this reason that he develops a "straight-passing" persona and hides his sexuality from the world. However, by the end of the film, he realizes that every man has the opportunity to define masculinity for himself, and that he can embrace all aspects of who he is without shame. Despite increasing acceptance of queer and trans people, there are still a lot of harmful concepts of masculinity that warp men's senses of self. I want to encourage viewers who are insecure about their gender expression to expand their idea of what it means to be a man and celebrate themselves as they truly are.

We also wanted to showcase the experience of a chubby teen going through this life-altering experience and allow him to be a fully-developed, nuanced character instead of a stereotype.

Growing up, I suffered from bullying and body-shaming because of my size. I always saw overweight men portrayed as the butt of the joke, which subconsciously delivered the message that there is nothing powerful or attractive about them. Dan is large but confident in his body, and over the course of the film teaches Jamie that there is nothing to be ashamed of about being a big guy. Even though it is often presented as solely a women's issue, body shaming affects everyone. Young people of all genders are susceptible to body image issues, particularly now when there is an endless well of images to compare ourselves to online. We need more male role models of body positivity like Dan and Jamie to encourage viewers to stop comparing themselves to others and embrace their bodies no matter the size.

I couldn't have made this film without my incredibly talented team. Producer Allison Tate was able to draw on an emotional understanding of the characters to help creatively shape the project with me from the script to the edit. As a filmmaker, she has been active in the Los Angeles LGBT community since 2015 via her work for leading queer media group EqualPride. She produced and directed video content about and for the queer community for four years at the company, including short narrative projects and mini-documentaries about queer and trans people showcasing their personal stories, struggles and triumphs. She also interviewed many notable figures including Christine Vachon (*Carol*, *Poison*) Cheryl Dunye (*The Watermelon Woman*), Joey Soloway (*Transparent*), and transgender trailblazers Miss Major and Kate Bornstein.

Queer casting director Kristi Lugo helped us bring on top talent like Emily Deschanel, in addition to emerging talent like our lead actor Isaac Krasner. She also brought on many other incredible actors who gave the performances in the film a lived-in specificity and authenticity. Working with an out cinematographer, Gus Bendinelli, and an out editor, Erik Vogt-Nilsen meant that queer perspectives shaped the visual and editorial language of the project. Many of our crew members are queer, trans, and non-binary, and their ideas and insight were critical in crafting a story that speaks authentically.

The biggest inspirations for this film were the unflinching yet hilarious *PEN15*, created by Maya Erskine and Anna Konkle, and *Eighth Grade*, directed by Bo Burnham. I wanted to

make something that took the same unromanticized yet compassionate look at adolescence and apply it to the story of a gay teenage boy. I've always loved naturalistic foreign films; *Tomboy*, directed by Celine Sciamma, and *The Return*, directed by Andrey Zvyagintsev, were major reference points. We took a lot of inspiration from how those films explore masculinity and depict young people, particularly siblings, with so much realism and nuance. We knew we wanted the film to have a calm, warm tone to it, with effortless cinematography and an even-keeled pace, and *Boyhood*, directed by Richard Linklater, was a big reference point for that. The cinematography and editing in Linklater's films perfectly express how the characters are feeling without ever drawing attention from the performances or story, and that became our number one priority as we worked on the film. Our DP, Gus Bendinelli, and I are also big fans of graphic novels, and looked at how cartoonists like Daniel Clowes and Adrian Tomine use simple, intentional composition and depict little details of mundane American life. We also studied how films like *Stranger by the Lake*, directed by Alain Guiraudie, and *Old Joy*, directed by Kelly Reichardt, capture gay desire within the natural world and the emotional quality of light at specific times of day.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Corey Sherman (Writer/Director/Producer)

Corey is a 29 year-old filmmaker living in Los Angeles. He grew up in Riverdale, a neighborhood in the north Bronx, just within New York City limits. He attended Horace Mann School, High School of American Studies at Lehman College, and majored in Film & Television Production at the University of Southern California. His mother was a journalist and his father an English professor, so he grew up around people who loved words and well-told stories. Corey started making comedy short films when he was eight years old, and continues making them to this day. A long-time lover of animation, Corey branched out from live action in college and created an animated web series titled *Billiams*, which was well-received online and led to a partnership with Matt Maiellaro, the creator of *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. Corey achieved a life-long dream when he wrote, directed, edited, and voiced a character on several episodes of Matt Maiellaro's animated Adult Swim show, *12 Oz. Mouse*. Corey is also passionate about nonfiction filmmaking, and recently edited Lawrence Kasdan's documentary short, *Last Week at Ed's*, which won the Audience Award for Best Marquee Feature at the 2019 Austin Film Festival. Corey is already at work on his next narrative feature, and hopes to build a career that allows him to alternate between his three passions - live action, animation, and documentary.

Allison Tate (Producer)

Allison Tate served as the Director of Editorial Video at EqualPride, where she led the video team and produced hundreds of videos for the largest LGBT brands in the world including The Advocate, Pride.com, and Out Magazine. The Advocate won a 2019 GLAAD award during her time there. Her producing credits include Season 7 of *Hey Qween!*, a talk show featuring *RuPaul's Drag Race* superstars. She also produced *Danny The Manny*, a web series about a gay babysitter and the cross-dressing kid he watches and influences. *IndieWire* called the show "nearly perfect" and listed it as one of the best web series of 2016. She graduated University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts with a B.A. in Film & Television Production. Her work has been on *Huffington Post*, *WIRED*, *them*, *Curve*, *Upworthy* and more.

Gus Bendinelli (Director of Photography)

Gus Bendinelli is a director of photography based in Los Angeles. His music video work has gained hundreds of millions of views and features artists like Kanye West, Ariana Grande, FINNEAS, Doja Cat, Michael Kiwanuka, and Ashe. He has shot major commercial campaigns for companies like Facebook, Nissan, MGM, and Google. His narrative short work has played at festivals around the world. His most recent feature film *American Cherry* won Best Cinematography at the LA Indies Festival, and his narrative short *Frank and Emmet* won Best Narrative Short Film at Cinelebu 2022. Gus is a member of the ICG Local 600 and is represented by ICM.

Rachel Scott (Production Designer)

Rachel Scott is a production designer and art director based in Los Angeles. She has led art departments on TV hits like HBO's *VEEP*, *Ballers*, and *Barry*, NBC's *The Good Place* and *A Little Late with Lily Singh*, FX's *Dave* and more. She has also designed numerous award-winning short films. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, where she studied film and television production with an emphasis on production design.

Erik Vogt-Nilsen (Editor)

Erik Vogt-Nilsen is a film editor based in Los Angeles. Graduating from University of Southern California with a B.A. in Dramatic Arts and a Minor in Cinematic Arts, he began working as an assistant editor at Work Editorial, one of the top listed edit houses internationally. Since then, he's edited the feature film *Don't Log Off*, starring Ariel Winter and Luke Benward, along with a number of narrative shorts that have been featured online and at festivals such as Comic-Con, NFFTY, and AFF. Outside of scripted film, he's edited music videos for artists like FINNEAS, Harry Styles, and Maggie Lindemann, as well as commercials for clients like Chase, Walmart, and Impossible Foods.

Will Wiesenfeld (Composer)

Will Wiesenfeld is a Los Angeles-based musician who has been composing original music for over 15 years, primarily under the aliases of Baths and Geotic for labels such as Anticon, Ghostly International, Hardly Art, and more. Will's output under his own name has been reserved but ever-present through his career, as the composer for the Netflix original series *Bee and Puppycat* (Natasha Allegri), and Dean Fleischer-Camp's *David and The Bible*.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Isaac Krasner (JAMIE) he/him

Isaac Krasner is set to co-star in the upcoming Nicole Kidman film *Holland, Michigan*. He has performed in television shows *Power Book III* and *New Amsterdam*, and the film *The Truth About Santa Claus* with Gilbert Gottfried and Judah Friedlander, in addition to a handful of short films. As an actor and a musician, he recently enrolled in Regional Center for the Arts, a half day school performing arts program where he is studying drumming, music theory, composition, and filmmaking four days a week. Isaac is a junior in high school and he aims to make a career in the performing arts.

Dora Madison (ALLIE) she/her

Best known for her work as Becky Sproles in NBC's hit series *FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS*, Madison has recently been with some very cool filmmakers including her lead in *Bliss* which premiered at Tribeca, *V.F.W.* opposite Stephen Lang, and critically acclaimed & festival award-winning indie sci-fi feature *Lapsis*. Madison's recent TV credits include season arcs on Emmy-winning series *Dexter*, the James Van Der Beek led *WHAT WOULD DIPLO DO*, Amazon's Emmy-nominated *DARK/WEB*, Hulu & Blumhouse's horror anthology series *INTO THE DARK*, and Dick Wolf's NBC hit drama series *CHICAGO FIRE*, crossing-over on *CHICAGO PD* and *CHICAGO MED*. Other credits include Linklater's *EVERYBODY WANTS SOME*, *SONG TO SONG* from Terrence Malick, *THE LOFT*, starring Wentworth Miller, James Marsden and Karl Urban, ABC Family's *THE LYING GAME*, and the CW's *STAR-CROSSED*.

David Johnson III (DAN) he/him

David Johnson III is a BFA graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, as well as a graduate of the British American Drama Academy Midsummer in Oxford in affiliation with the Yale School of Drama. Most recently, he has completed a recurring role in the Apple+ drama miniseries *Lady in the Lake* opposite Natalie Portman and Moses Ingram.

Taj Cross (WILL) he/him

At the young age of eighteen actor, Taj Cross is someone who can capture an audience through his personality and skills that surpass his age. Hulu's original series *PEN15* debuted Taj's acting career starring as Sam and was created, written, and executive produced by Maya Erskine, Anna Konkle who respectively act as characters of their own name. You can also find him in *Young Rock* on NBC, starring as The Rock's childhood best friend, Gabe.

Emily Deschanel (NICOLE) she/her

Deschanel can most recently be seen in Netflix's *Devil in Ohio*, which was released in September 2022 to more than 35 million hours streamed within the first 3 days on the platform. Prior, Deschanel starred in Season 4 of TNT's *Animal Kingdom*. Before that, she can be seen in FOX's hit show, *Bones*, opposite David Boreanaz. The procedural drama noted for its light comedic undertone finished its 12th and final season in 2017 and Emily directed the first episode. Deschanel's performance has garnered her three Teen Choice Award nominations for "Choice TV Actress: Drama" and three People's Choice Award nominations for "Favorite TV Drama Actress" as well as a nomination for "Favorite TV Crime Fighter" and "Favorite TV Duo." On the big screen, Deschanel has starred in Anne Renton's independent comedy, *The Perfect Family*, opposite Kathleen Turner and Jason Ritter; Nick Cassavetes' *My Sister's Keeper* opposite Cameron Diaz, Abigail Breslin and Jason Patric; and Jerry Bruckheimer's *Glory Road* opposite Josh Lucas, Derek Luke and Jon Voight. Other film credits include Anthony Minghella's *Cold Mountain*, John Lee Hancock's *The Alamo*, Sam Raimi's *Spiderman 2*, Stephen Kay's *Boogeyman*, and Jane Weinstock's *Easy*. Deschanel's television credits include guest star appearances on *Crossing Jordan*, *Providence*, *Law and Order: SVU*, and *Drunk History*. In addition, she appeared in Stephen King's mini-series, *Rose Red*. Emily also lent her voice to a character in *The Simpsons*.

Marion Van Cuyck (ERIKA) she/her

Marion is known for her recurring character of Terra Newback on both seasons of the Emmy-nominated show *PEN15* on Hulu. She also is known for her work on Netflix's *Frankenstein's Monster's Monster Frankenstein* alongside David Harbor. Some of her other works include on Nickelodeon's *Drama Club* and FX's *Baskets*. Marion is a drummer, singer, animator, and loves to draw. Currently, Marion is writing a feature length horror film that she hopes to produce and star in.

Emma Broz (QUINN) she/her

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, Emma Broz grew up playing just about every sport you can think of with her dad as her coach until she discovered her passion for performing. Her dreams led her to eventually relocate to Los Angeles with the support of her family. Within her first year in the city Emma was 1 of 12 artists selected out of upwards of 130,000 to perform on stage in front of top industry professionals, which led her to book her first job in a music video. Emma has gone on to have more fun experiences in front of the camera and currently trains at Stuart Rogers' Studios in North Hollywood. Emma says she will forever be a student of the arts and is thrilled by all the opportunities that are coming her way as she continues to grow as an artist. Emma is very excited to make her feature film debut as Quinn in *Big Boys*, and hopes that audience members enjoy the film and walk away with a broader perspective on the LGBTQ+ community.

Jack de Sanz (FANTASY JAMIE) he/him

Jack de Sanz is a film, stage, and voice actor from San Francisco, California. He is a BFA graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, as well as a graduate of the Studies in Shakespeare program at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. You can hear his voice in the upcoming comedy feature *Strays* opposite Will Ferrell and Rob Riggle. Jack performs improv and sketch comedy regularly in Los Angeles, and you can catch him in a slapstick comedy version of *Titus Andronicus* this Fall where he chases after a severed hand attached to an RC car.

FILM INFORMATION

Country: USA
World Premiere: 2023 BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival
Running Time: 88 minutes
Production Company: Perfect Dog Pictures / The Film Collaborative
Film Format / Camera: Digital / ARRI Alexa Mini
Filming Locations: Lake Arrowhead, CA and Los Angeles, CA

Website: <https://www.BigBoysFilm.com/>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/BigBoysFilm

Twitter: www.twitter.com/BigBoysTheFilm

TikTok www.tiktok.com/@bigboysfeaturefilm

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BigBoysFilm

Hashtag: #BigBoysFilm