



FILM: **BOY ERASED**

FDG RATING: 3.5 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Joel Edgerton: *director*
Lucas Hedges: *actor, Jared Eamons*
Russell Crowe: *actor, Marshall Eamons*
Nicole Kidman: *actress, Nancy Eamons*

DATE: December 16, 2018

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **BOY ERASED**

Boy Erased is an important, enlightening, and heart wrenching film about a teenage boy who is enrolled in conversion therapy after his parents learn that he is uncertain about his sexual identity. Most of our film discussion group were not aware that today 36 American states still allow conversion therapy so a realistic look (based on a 2016 memoir by Garrard Conley) at what takes place was educational not only for us but for the broad audience of viewers.

We knew to expect an outstanding performance from Lucas Hedges as Jared Eamons, the son of Marshall Eamons, a small-town Baptist pastor and car dealer (excellent performance from Russell Crowe), and his wife Nancy. Nicole Kidman plays the nurturing mother role perfectly in contrast to Marshall whose unwavering religious beliefs have no room for wayward sexuality. When Jared confesses that he sometimes thinks about boys, his parents are immediately concerned about how they would be perceived by family, friends, and the community so quickly usher him off for a sure cure through conversion therapy at Love in Action, a center devoted to refitting novice young LGBTQ's for the heterosexual path.

What allowed Jared to hold on to his own inner strength, was that, as part of the program, the "therapists" (uncertified) want him to get angry at his parents, which he refused to do. Also, he is an aspiring writer and always kept a notebook of his completed/in-progress stories with him, which among the many restrictions enforced, was taken away from him and that definitely made him defiantly angry.

We are witness to the humiliation and invasive scrutiny of various aspects of vulnerable boys and a few girls, each struggling with a slightly different expression of identity searching and each coping, submitting, or defying the intrusiveness of the people instructed with their "care". It's not surprising that those in charge are closeted homosexuals turning their self-loathing outward, or religious fanatics certain that the indignities they inflict on their vulnerable charges are all in a day's faith-based work. Also, not surprising is the inflated cost that the facility charges.

As one discussion participant pointed out, the story is not new, in fact there have been a few other films recently that focused on the same issues. He commented that the movie is earnest but not entertaining, nor enlightening. Others had a more favorable reaction giving the film a score of 4 but those were undermined by a 2 and a couple 3.5s resulting in an unconverted 3.5 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

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