

Interview: Garrett Clayton for Reeling2016's Closing Night Film 'King Cobra'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 29, 2016 - 10:12am

- [34th](#) [2]
- [Alicia Silverstone](#) [3]
- [Bi-Sexual](#) [4]
- [Chicago](#) [5]
- [Christian Slater](#) [6]
- [Closing Night](#) [7]
- [Disney Channel](#) [8]
- [Garrett Clayton](#) [9]
- [Gay](#) [10]
- [Hairspray Live](#) [11]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [12]
- [IFC Films](#) [13]
- [Interview](#) [14]
- [James Franco](#) [15]
- [King Cobra](#) [16]
- [Lesbian](#) [17]
- [LGBTQ+](#) [18]
- [Molly Ringwald](#) [19]
- [Music Box Theatre](#) [20]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [21]
- [Queer](#) [22]
- [Reeling2016](#) [23]
- [Teen Beach Movie](#) [24]
- [The Fosters](#) [25]
- [Transsexual](#) [26]

CHICAGO – Closing Night for Reeling2016 is Thursday, Sep. 29th, after Chicago's LGBTQ+ International Film Festival has presented a week of cinema celebrations. The Landmark Century Centre Cinema is the scene for "King Cobra," directed by Justin Kelly and featuring Garrett Clayton. The film is a notorious overview of the life of gay porn star Brent Corrigan. Both Clayton and the director are scheduled to appear on behalf of the film.

Reeling2016, the Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival is finishing its 34th year, and has celebrated a week of an incredible line-up of films, events and parties around town, at venues as diverse as the Music Box Theater, Landmark's Century Centre Cinema and Chicago Filmmakers.



Garrett Clayton (hoodie) and the Cast of 'King Cobra', the Closing Night Film at Reeling2016

Photo credit: IFC Films

Garrett Clayton is having a breakout year in 2016. A native of Dearborn, Michigan, Clayton cut his teeth on the Disney Channel, portraying Tanner in the “Teen Beach Movie” series. After a recurring role on ABC Family’s “The Fosters,” Clayton took on the part of Brent Corrigan in “King Cobra,” alongside Christian Slater, James Franco, Molly Ringwald and Alicia Silverstone. He also will be playing Link Larkin in the upcoming “Hairspray Live!” in December on NBC-TV, with Harvey Fierstein, Kristen Chenoweth, Jennifer Hudson and Martin Short.

HollywoodChicago.com: How does one make the journey from Disney Channel Teen movies to a bio of a gay porn star? Was this an intentional step to change your image?

Garrett Clayton: It’s a consequence of getting a bit older and wanting to more challenging roles – once you start shaving you’re done at Disney. I got the opportunity to read for it and meet director Justin Kelly, and I thought if now is the time to take the risk in a challenging role this was the opportunity. I don’t think you get many chances to break the mold of who you are, so I didn’t want to pass up this opportunity.

HollywoodChicago.com: Despite all the seaminess depicted in the film, what part of Brent’s life and lifestyle did you actually have sympathy for?

Clayton: I was, like Brent, someone who made his own path in life, and that’s how I related to him. When you’re young, you can be misled by older people, who know how to manipulate you. To take on that circumstance and take charge of your own life, and do what you want, instead of letting other people tell you what to do – that is where I found Brent’s character in me.

HollywoodChicago.com: Did you get a chance to talk to the real Brent Corrigan?

Clayton: No, Justin wanted to keep us separated. At first, I wanted to study and mimic him, and go all out as far as trying to portray him. When I booked the role, Justin and I had a couple conversations, and we agreed that it was better to separate myself from the real life Brent. We took the subject very seriously – reviews calling it a dark comedy are missing the mark.

HollywoodChicago.com: What kind of research did director Justin Kelly have you do? What did you find out about the world of that side of pornography that you didn’t expect?

Clayton: That is interesting, because the research I did was of my own volition. I did a bit of reminiscence for Brent, small nuances about him so that fans of his would still get a sense of him. It was hard to balance, because it’s easy to make stuff like that a joke. People right now are asking me what it’s like to do Link in ‘Hairspray!’ I do want to give fans what they expect about that character, but I also want to create something special about him through me.

Nothing shocked me about the porn industry, we’ve all heard of the darkness in it. In my research, I found sadness. People couldn’t shake the industry, even if they left, and it affected their lives if anyone found out about it later – there were many sad endings. I actually gained some sympathy for those who went through that.

HollywoodChicago.com: Did you find that Brent had that sad post-porn life?

Clayton: No, I don’t think sad thoughts about him. If you look at him now, he has made what he wanted out of his life. He wanted to be an equestrian, and he is. He wanted to produce his own adult films, and he does. He owned that life, and owned himself, and that is something I really respected.

HollywoodChicago.com: You were on the set with some veteran actors. What do you think you learned about the technique of acting from observing people like Christian Slater, James Franco and Molly Ringwald?

Clayton: What I took away personally was that the work never ends. People tend to think that if someone is a movie star, that automatically everything is easier and there is less pressure. But all of them still keep that pressure on, are still inspired and still care about the work. I also took away how important it was to make good friendships and relationships. I was happy that everyone cared about the work, and I constantly ran scenes with all the people you mentioned. It really was about the work for them, and that was incredible.



Garrett Clayton in the Disney Channel's 'Teen Beach Movie'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment

HollywoodChicago.com: You were born in a generation that was much more accepting of persons who are gay than previous generations. What challenges do you believe gay people still face in the modern day age of 2016?

Clayton: I still feel my generation is split on their attitudes. I find that half of people I meet are open and want the world to love and be loved, but there are others who are bigoted and hurtful, and want to vote for Trump. There are still places in this country that we need to nurture, to allow them to understand that there are other ways of living, and it's not wrong, just because it's not your way of living.

HollywoodChicago.com: You were born Gary Clayton. How do you think changing your name to Garrett made Gary a different person, and did you like the changes that came along with it?

Clayton: It's funny you asked that. I was very headstrong about wanting to keep my name when I moved to Los Angeles. But casting directors would call my managers and say I was perfect for the part, but my name wasn't marketable – I was a young guy, and had the old man name of Gary. [laughs] I kept losing jobs because of the name not being marketable, so I changed it to Garrett. Amazingly, within six months I booked 'Teen Beach Movie,' a Lifetime movie and more TV shows. I was shocked that all it took was changing my name.

HollywoodChicago.com: Are you in rehearsals for "Hairspray Live!"? And what are the different challenges you face for this production, besides going live in front of millions of people for a one time show?

Clayton: We start soon, but I can't say at what point we're at. The expectation is that I would be nervous about this, but I get a bit of nerves in anything I do. This circumstance of doing it live is part of old time television that they brought back, and it's up to me to find a balance between doing it live on a stage and knowing a camera is a couple feet away – it's finding energy without exploding.

HollywoodChicago.com: Now that you broke out of the teen mold with the outside-the-box character in 'King Cobra,' what type of role do you think you'd want to get to the next step in your performance challenge as an actor?

Clayton: I've been putting together something right now with a writer/actor and producer that I know will be very interesting. I want to keep pushing my abilities and testing it in the marketplace. When I moved to Los Angeles, my goal was to gain respect – whether it's in big or small projects – and as long as the work is good I'm happy.

"King Cobra" is the Closing Night film of "Reeling2016," the 34th edition of Chicago's LGBTQ+ International Film Festival, at 7pm on Thursday, September 29th, 2016, at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema – 2828 N Clark Street in Chicago. For an overview of the 2016 festival, and Closing Night ticket information, [click here](#). [27]



[28]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [29]
Writer, Editorial Coordinator
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [28]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 24 2024 - 8:16pm*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/26857/interview-garrett-clayton-for-reeling2016-closing-night-film-king-cobra>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/34th>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/alicia-silverstone>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bi-sexual>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chicago>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/christian-slater>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/closing-night>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/disney-channel>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/garrett-clayton>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gay>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hairspray-live>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ifc-films>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/james-franco>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/king-cobra>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lesbian>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lgbtq-0>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/molly-ringwald>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/music-box-theatre>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [22] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/queer>
- [23] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/reeling2016>
- [24] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/teen-beach-movie>
- [25] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-fosters>
- [26] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/transsexual>
- [27] <http://reelingfilmfestival.org/>
- [28] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [29] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>