

Film Review: ‘Boy Erased’ Thrives On Empathy, Lacks Overall Conviction

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on November 13, 2018 - 3:56pm

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CHICAGO – America is facing a confusing time of crisis, again. There are giant groups of people who are ready to hate other people for biological traits that can’t—and don’t need to—be changed, like skin color, sexual orientation, and race. “Boy Erased” adds to the national dialogue by showing the devastating effects this type of mentality can have inside our own families, and how to prevent it.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Joel Edgerton is the absolute driving force as director, writer, and actor for “Boy Erased”. He adapts the film from Garrard Conley’s memoir of the same name, where he chronicles his personal experience inside of a church conversion program. Edgerton approaches the topic with all due respect as he meticulously crafts everything in the film. Nothing is wrong with it, but its neatness is something that’s symptomatic of a missing element. There is a clear understanding of the topic, alongside an even clearer message that it sends, but what it’s missing is that extra bit of conviction that comes when you step outside of your safety zone.

The story follows Jared (Lucas Hedges) as he goes submits himself to a conversion program that forces himself to reflect on the past that leads him to that point. Edgerton does a great job at incorporating Jared’s past experiences through flashbacks triggered by the questions asked in the program. Unfortunately, they are often presented with little to no context so we just have to take them for what they are—examples of past gay experiences. There is only one such past encounter in the film that truly carries the emotional heft we’d expect the rest of them to have, and it is such a dark experience for Jared, but the focus quickly shifts to something else after this traumatic event.

“Boy Erased” opened in Chicago on November 9th. Featuring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Joel Edgerton, and Troye Sivan. Directed by Joel Edgerton. Written by Joel Edgerton. Rated “R”



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Love and acceptance shouldn't be something to needs to be worked at, but Nicole Kidman and Lucas Hedges work hard at it in 'Boy Erased'

Photo credit: Focus Features



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