

1614 Productions Presents

BIG HOUSE



a film by Jack Lawrence Mayer

Comedy | USA | 84 min | 1.85 | Dolby 5.1/stereo
bighousemovie.com

Publicity Contact

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“Compelling, a playfully absurd comedy that is brimming with spontaneity and filled with memorable characters. The cinematography is both nuanced and expressive.”
- Rhode Island International Film Festival



INFO

Big House is a 2021 independent film written and directed by Jack Lawrence Mayer, produced by 1614 Productions, and filmed on location in Oceanside, California. It was produced by Erika Grammel and Ellie Reed. bighousemovie.com

LOGLINE

Two sisters, two boyfriends, one simple birthday weekend getaway. Or it would have been, if not for the threesome, the love affair, the unexpected arrival of a fiancé, and the ensuing ridiculous dinner role play charade everyone is forced to participate in just to keep from getting caught.

SYNOPSIS

Monogamy doesn't run strong in Claire and Ali's paternal bloodline. But there's a healthy way of dealing with the desire for more than one partner — for instance, Ali and her boyfriend Art have invited Jas, a woman they met on an open relationships app, to join them for a threesome - and a not-so-healthy way, like how Claire is cheating on her fiancé, Zach, with her coworker, a guy named, in all seriousness, String. When all six of these people find themselves stuck in the same house for what was supposed to be a beach weekend, the result is something of a dramatic farce: intensely felt, emotionally raw, and laugh-out-loud funny.

Released by *Gravitas Ventures*™

SUMMARY

BIG HOUSE is an acutely observed human comedy about a pivotal weekend in the lives of six complicated (which is another way of saying typical) people. It begins with a weekend trip — two half-sisters (Claire and Ali) are each bringing their boyfriends to their dad's old beach house. But Claire's boyfriend, String, is decidedly not her fiancé, Zach. Claire has never been so bold as to take String on a trip before, it's kind of like taking the "next big step" in their cheating-relationship. Ali on the other hand is bringing her long-term partner, Art, but with a twist: she's talked him into downloading a "throuples" app and the two of them have invited a third person over to the beach house for some sexy, explorational good times.

Everything is fine — relatively fine, as fine as this kind of set up could be — until Zach shows up to the house as a surprise. His out of town business trip has been cancelled. When he shows up he walks straight into the bedroom where he and Claire usually stay, and sees two sets of luggage, Sting's and Claire's, unpacked, the ground covered in clothes and underwear, and an unmade bed where two people clearly just had sex.

When Zach asks what happens, Claire lies, and everyone goes along with it, and Zach somehow believes it. She tells Zach that String is just a friend, recently out of a relationship, and Ali and Claire brought him to be set up with Jasmine - who hasn't even shown up yet. When Jasmine arrives, Claire has to talk her into going along with this low-key farce of false identities. A long night of drinking, cooking, singing, and card playing follows. It goes probably without saying that everything comes to a crisis, somehow with both a bang and a whimper.

FESTIVAL HISTORY

2021 Cinequest Film & V R Festival

2020 Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival: Grand Prize Narrative Feature

2020 RiverRun International Film Festival

2020 North Hollywood Cinefest: Best Picture Winner, Best Director Nomination: Jack Lawrence Mayer, Best Actor Nomination: Evan O'Brien

2020 Chicago Indie Film Awards: Semi-Finalist

CAST

Ellie Reed as CLAIRE
Paige Collins as ALI
Michael Molina as STRING
Albert Huber as ART
Evan O'Brien as ZACH
Zoe Schwartz as JAS
Jacob Hurwitz-Goodman as ROGER

CREW

Written and Directed by: Jack Lawrence Mayer
Producers: Erika Grammel and Ellie Reed

Director of Photography: Bill Meese
Creative Consulting Producer: Jacob Hurwitz-Goodman
Gaffer & Key Grip: Mark Phillips

Production Sound by Twin Sound
Erik Duemig: Production Sound Mixer
Crow Duemig: Boom Operator

Max Taylor: Music Supervisor
Music by Matthew Luis Rivera & Daniel Weber

Editor: Jack Lawrence Mayer
Colorist: Aaron Shapiro
Post Production Audio Services provided by Verbitskiy.Sound
Title Designer: Quinn Fenlon

CAST AND CREW BIOS

Jack Lawrence Mayer (writer/director/editor)

Jack was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a writer and director known for the digital series, *Single Long* (HBO GO, 2013), *Moonlighter to Mars* (College Humor/Big Breakfast, 2017) and the digital comedy series, *Distance*, which premiered at the 2016 SXSW, was nominated for a Gotham Award for best breakthrough series. Jack was also the recipient for the Edes Prize for Emerging Artists for his work as artistic director of Screen Door, a theater company that created live, multi-media movies in storefront theater spaces in Chicago.

Ellie Reed (Claire) is an actress, writer, and improviser from Chicago, IL. Notable television credits include *Girlboss* (Netflix), *Mom* (CBS), *I Think You Should Leave with Tim Robinson* (Netflix), *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (NBC), *Diary of a Future President* (Disney+), *Two Broke Girls* (CBS), *Chicago P.D.* (NBC), and *The Big Bang Theory* (CBS). Now based in Los Angeles, Ellie is represented as an actor and writer by CAA and 3Arts Entertainment.

Michael Molina (String) is a Colombian-American writer, performer and cartoonist who grew up in Fairview Park, Ohio. After graduating from Columbia University, Michael lived in New York City where he produced sketch videos and the feature film "Trivia Night" with comedy troupe Local Empire. He moved to Los Angeles to pursue his writing career and has developed shows with partners including Jack Black and Norman Lear. He is currently a staff writer on the Nickelodeon series "The Casagrandes."

Paige Collins (Ali) is an actor originally from Chicago. In Chicago, she worked with Jackalope Theatre, Dog + Pony Theatre, The Goodman, and so many others. She is a proud company member of The House Theatre of Chicago. Since moving to LA she's worked on *Distance*, a web series directed in part by Jack and recently helped produce/starred in a short called *The Workplace* written by Annah Feinberg and directed by Carlyn Hudson. Television credits include *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Better Call Saul* (AMC) and *Good Girls* (NBC).

Zoe Schwartz (Jas) is an LA based writer and performer. She has been performing comedy and original shows all over the country for over 10 years. She has shown work at Second City Chicago, The PIT and The Magnet in NYC, The Minneapolis Fringe Festival, Frontera Fest in Austin, and in many backrooms of bars. Zoe appears as a recurring french spy in Amazon Prime's cult hit "Patriot". She recently worked as a writer's assistant for the Awesomeness/ Youtube Originals show "Overthinking With Kat and June".

Evan O'Brien (Zach) is an actor, writer, and comedian from New England known for Parks and Recreation (NBC), Marlon (NBC), and General Hospital (ABC). His eclectic range of characters began with sketch comedy appearances as a teenager on Late Night with Conan O'Brien (NBC). With degrees in writing and cinema from Northeastern University, Evan followed up by excelling as a writer/actor in The Second City Director's Program. Drawn to pushing boundaries with darkly comedic and ardent characters, O'Brien wrote, co-produced, and acted in series Local News (Odenkirk Provissiero) as well as co-created celebrated documentary The Future Is Female. He is currently CCO at Capturely, Inc.

Albert Huber (Art) is a former stand-up comedian and possibly a future Lawyer. For the past five years he has been performing comedy in LA and around California, acting in commercials, and doing strange little projects (he made a wordless short film about a space-traveling noir detective). He also co-created and produced the web series LA Famous. He is currently deciding whether or not to defer NYU Law School for another year.

CREW

Bill Meese (Cinematographer)

Michigan native Bill first started making films while in high school using mostly miniDV camcorders, a basic editing program that was included with his family computer and all fueled by an intrinsic love for creating visual art. Some of these first films led him to Emerson College in Boston, MA, where he graduated the competitive B.F.A. Film program with honors and a concentration in cinematography and screenwriting.

In the 10 years since, Bill has shot projects for Vice, NBC Universal, CNN, The History Channel, Discovery, Billboard, New York Post, MTV, Lifetime, Bravo, DIS.art, Atlas Obscura, and many more. Big House marks his second feature-length narrative film as Director of Photography.

Erika Grammel (Producer)

Erika is poly-passionate, using her marketing background and professional experience in the arts and non-profit sectors to disrupt, create, and produce systems of interconnectivity and engagement. Prior to Los Angeles, she worked in Chicago as a marketing and communications consultant to nonprofits and a co-founder/co-owner of The Dilettantes (an immersive event and design agency). She works at a production company in Culver City and continues to collaborate on independently-produced projects across Los Angeles, providing producerial and marketing expertise.

Jacob Hurwitz-Goodman (Creative Consulting Producer)

Jacob is a documentary, scripted, and commercial filmmaker, based in LA. His eclectic, intimate work has won an EMMY and an Edes Award for Emerging Artists. Jacob's films have appeared on PBS, NBC Left Field, WIRED, Atlas Obscura, DIS, Discovery Digital, the Huffington Post, The New York Post, Al Jazeera, Participant Media, ATTN, Hakai Magazine, NowThis, and this website. Along with partner Nick George, he is the creator of the critically acclaimed, immersive documentary webseries Far Off Sounds about obscure, ecstatic musical experiences around the world. He has directed documentary films, music videos, and commercials in Vietnam, Ghana, Tahiti, the United Kingdom, and across the American continent.

Production Sound by

Erik Duemig, Production Sound Mixer // Crow Duemig, Boom Operator

Twin Sound is a production sound recording team comprised of actual twins Crow Duemig (Boom Operator, pictured left, They/Them) and Erik Duemig (Sound Mixer, pictured right, He/Him). Their unique shorthand as lifelong best friends brings both efficiency and panache to every film set they work on. Off set (and on, sometimes) they share a passion for Gong Fu Cha, a Chinese discipline for steeping and serving tea, which they have been studying for over a decade. Twin Sound is local to both Los Angeles, CA and Austin, TX.

Max Taylor (Music Supervisor)

Max Taylor is a Los Angeles based Music Supervisor. Having spent the past 4 season working on the music team for FOX's EMPIRE, Big House is his first feature film. You can catch him in his downtime riding his Big Wheel around the neighborhood and catching fireflies with his friends.

Matthew Luis Rivera & Daniel Weber (Composers)

Matthew Luis Rivera was born on January 17, 1989. He is best known for his work as the artist moodbymatteo. Big House is his first original film score, but movies are cool and he would love to do it again.

Daniel Weber is a music producer + songwriter from Los Angeles by way of the Midwest. Most of the time he's making songs with moodbymatteo and other artists/songwriters in L.A. He's thrilled to have Big House be his first film score and looks forward to doing many more down the road.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Big House is my most personal work to date. I am one of my father's six kids, spread across three marriages, though Dad did also have affairs consistently throughout his life. My sister Kathleen and I have three older half-siblings and a younger half-brother. Between all of us, our ages span over 30 years. With this story, I wanted to try and convey what it's like to be close with a half-sibling and to be a part of a complicated multi-family structure. I wanted to show kids who saw their Dad as a good father but a bad husband — and allowed that contradiction to exist in their relationship.

I have found that people who allow for the existence of contradictions in their lives and relationships are far less judgmental than those who do not. I personally don't have the heart to judge any of the characters in Big House, and I hope the movie doesn't, either. In fact, I hope more than anything that audience members will disagree with one another about who was right and who was wrong, who they felt for and who they didn't, who they were attracted to and who they couldn't care less about. As my siblings and I well know, life is filled with these complicated allegiances and affinities, and universal agreement is rarely possible amongst humans with feelings. Agreement, however, is not necessary to achieve harmony, and I think small movies play an important role in reminding us that if we look closely and without judgment, we'll find that most of us are coming from an understandable place. — Jack Lawrence Mayer

PRODUCERS STATEMENT (SHORT)

When Jack said he wanted to film an improv-heavy feature in two days with six actors, three cameras, and continuously-running sound in one house, we weren't surprised. We have both been working with him for nearly a decade, and in that time his ideas have consistently been conceptually and creatively unique in form — artistry that's designed to push-the-envelope. Wrangling cast and crew alone, we knew production could have been a disaster, producing a bunch of unusable footage created by a bunch of frustrated people. But it wasn't, and it didn't. Together, we assembled a cast and crew of smart, passionate, highly-skilled people who were ready and eager to take on this challenge. Jack led the set with ease and empathy, placing a priority on communication and collaboration. So in the end, disaster was averted (as it always is on a Jack Lawrence Mayer production) and a bunch of motivated, happy people created an intimate, relevant, funny, grounded film in an incredibly short amount of time. We all couldn't be prouder of the process or the product. — Ellie Reed and Erika Grammel

PRODUCERS STATEMENT (FULL)

When Jack asks you to work on a project with him, you say yes. Not just because his ambitious, pushing-the-envelope ideas always seem to lure you in and not just because you like him as a person (though, sure, both of those are factors). You say yes to a Jack Lawrence Mayer project because you not only know you're eventually going to get a fantastic finished product, but mostly because you know you're going to have the absolute best time every minute you're at work.

Jack's ideas aren't what we would call commercial or easy. They are conceptually and creatively unique in form, demanding a level of expertise across the board and welcoming collaboration and creative input from all those involved. So, it's a good thing that Jack is extremely adept at building an esteemed team of smart, passionate, and highly-skilled actors and crew for each of his projects. Big House, naturally, follows this same pattern.

In different capacities, both of us have worked with Jack for nearly a decade, collaborating on a variety of projects.. Short films, features, photoshoots, web series, immersive theatre... you name a creative endeavor, Jack's probably had a hand in it, and we've followed him to the ends of the Earth to make it happen. Really. We've flown to New York City to film a short in a studio apartment sans air conditioning in the middle of summer, we've snuck into abandoned buildings and cabins and sewers to film a feature in Detroit, and we've set up and set off fireworks in the middle of a field in rural Indiana to film a music video, just to name a few examples. So, when Jack said he wanted to film an improv-heavy feature in two days with six actors, three cameras, four camera operators, and continuously-running sound in one house in Oceanside, we honestly weren't that surprised. We also weren't worried. We knew he would make it happen and that he would make it fun for everyone involved. And we were right.

As a director, Jack is communicative, collaborative, and hardworking as hell, and that makes all of our jobs much easier. He leads with ease and empathy, and as a result, his sets are true bonding grounds for cast and crew alike. So when those inevitable, unforeseeable production setbacks occur (like, say, constant pouring rain when this was supposed to be a film about a beach vacation, or all of the restaurants and grocery stores in Oceanside closing down for the weekend due to a rainstorm so powerful it left thousands without power), you don't grumble as much as you might have otherwise, even while driving forty-five minutes to the next town over just to procure lunch for everyone.

PRODUCERS STATEMENT (FULL — CONTINUED)

Under a less deft hand, production on Big House could have been a disaster. Wrangling six actors, four camera operators, and two sound people all at once could have produced a bunch of unusable footage created by a bunch of frustrated people. But it wasn't, and it didn't. Instead, a bunch of motivated, happy people created an intimate, relevant, funny, grounded film in an incredibly short amount of time. And while we certainly pulled as many organizational, financial, social, and structural strings as we could, Big House wouldn't have happened, and wouldn't be what it is without Jack.

We always say yes to Jack, because we know we can always bet on him to create an unforgettable experience and an incredible product. We're hoping you say yes to him, too, and help us take Big House (and Jack's work) further than it's ever gone before. Join his team. You won't regret it.

