

BULLDOG

Directed and written by **André Szardenings**

Starring **Julius Nitschkoff, Lana Cooper, Karin Hanczewski**

Producer **Katharina Kolleczeck; Lea Neu**

Production Company **IFS Internationale Filmschule Köln, André Szardenings, Bayerischer Rundfunk.**

Original Title: Bulldog | Germany 2022 | Drama, LGBT | German OV | 95' | Audio 5.1 | Colour | Aspect Ratio 1,5:1
| Shot On Red |

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Bruno's irrational, symbiotic relationship with his mother Toni, is turned upside down when her new girlfriend Hannah, decides to move into their bungalow in Spain. Up until now, Bruno has always been the center of his mum's attention but now that Hannah is there things are different.

LONG SYNOPSIS

For as long as 21-year-old Bruno can remember, there has only been him and the unconditional love of his mother Toni, who is 15 years older. Nothing else seems to find room in the chaotic life of the two. It is only when Hannah, Toni's new partner, moves into the bungalow they share in Spain that Bruno is in danger of losing his mother's essential love. Displaced from the bed they share, Bruno must realize that his previous sense of responsibility for Toni, is a greater burden for him than he thought. Faced with the decision between his own life and the suffocating relationship with his mother, Bruno realizes that this will be the first decision he has to make on his own...

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

André Szardenings was born in 1989 in Düsseldorf, Germany. After high school, he worked for several commercial production companies, mainly as a DoP and for films like Cloud Atlas directed by Tom Tykwer in the location department. After five years, he felt that even though he liked cinematography, he was more interested in directing and working with actors. He applied at international filmschool Cologne (ifs) for the directing class and was accepted. He finished his studies with his feature film BULLDOG, which was immediately nominated for the most significant German newcomer award: First Steps Awards. Since he knew how to handle a camera, he not only directed BULLDOG but also did the cinematography and wrote the script.

CAST BIOGRAPHY

Julius Nitschkoff (Bruno) was born 1995 in Berlin. His feature film debut was in 2015. Since then he has appeared in over 60 productions like the Netflix show PARFUM, the Sky series DAS BOOT and the Amazon show BEAT; playing a wide range of roles. He is known for the lead in TOUBAB (2021).

Lana Cooper (Toni) is a German actress. For her first main role in LOVE STEAKS she won the award for best acting at the Filmfest München and Evolution Mallorca. Also for following projects like „Beat beat heart“ she won an award at Günter Rohrbach Filmfest and for „Looping“ at the Achtung Berlin Filmfest. Since she started acting she took part in more than 50 productions and also directed 3 short-, and one fiction movie.

Karin Hanczewski (Hannah) is a German-Polish actress. She played the leading role in movies like LOTTE, IM SOMMER WOHT ER UNTEN und BRUDER SCHWESTERHERZ, which all won best feature film prizes at several national- as well as international film festivals. She also has won the best actress award at the 48-hour Film Festival in Berlin. Since 2016 she has played the leading role in Germany's most successful crime Show TATORT. From the beginning of her acting career, she has starred in over 50 productions.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

It was Summer 1997. I was 7 years old and with my parents on a vacation in Spain. If you would've told me at that time, that 23 years later I'd be filming my first feature film in the same bungalow that we were living in, I'd probably would've laughed.

Very early on in the planing process of my final project in film school I decided to shoot in Spain. I fell in love with the idea of telling the co-dependend relationship of Bruno and Toni on an island. Just as Bruno and Toni are unable to leave the bubble that they've created for themselves, this island would make it harder for them to leave or change their circumstances physically. So when I was talking to a friend, I've suddenly had the idea of going back to the bungalow that I've stayed in before and where I already had personal memories. I think without even realizing, shooting in a place that I've already knew, enabled me to shoot the story in a very intimate way.

"BULLDOG" is a description of the main characters outwards appearance to me. I was interested in showing this buff boy from the outside and exploring his softer, sensitive, fragile and emotional core. In this way I was happy to find Julius Nitschkoff who combined both of the aspects I was looking for. Once I had found him I wrote the entire part tailor-made for him. For me as a gay man it was important to have a different approach to the film's topic. I wanted to show a cis male, whose life is controlled or influenced only by women and/or queer characters and thereby show Bruno in a way usually women are shown in cinema.

Having the chance of doing the camera myself also helped me to interact with the actors in a way I couldn't have done, if I would've been "just" directing. The camera is not just the observer it's also a character in the room. And I like when the actor and the audience feel the camera. The actor feels observed and sometimes I intuitively came even closer with the camera to intensify this feeling for Julius. I was not just directing the story, I was part of the story and it also gave me the chance to direct in a very special way. Since Julius was super close to me, I could whisper during each take directions into his ear that he could immediately adapt, which also helped to shoot BULLDOG as authentically as possible and give the actors and also myself flexibility. Furthermore we only dressed the set that was Brunos and Tonis Bungalow. All other sets were real. Zoe (the little girl in the movie) actually lives in the resort with her parents who allowed us to film in her real room.

In the end, when we were taking the bungalow set apart and removed everything it was a very hurtful process because it felt like we were destroying the life that we've been creating during the shooting. Knowing that this place with those characters will never exist like this again was tough. It was only later in the editing room that I realised that everything was still there captured on film.

Later after finishing the editing of BULLDOG I found some old VHS-C tapes that my dad filmed during our stay and suddenly I noticed that I basically shot the exact same shots of Julius that my dad took of me back then.

GENRE

Drama

CREW:

Writer & director **André Szardenings**

Director of Photography **André Szardenings**

Commissioning Editor **Natalie Lambsdorff & Carlos Gerstenhauer**

Costume **Kaya Olbs**

Producers **Katharina Kolleczeck & Lea Neu**

Sound Design **Lukas Rabl, Johannes Grote, Fabian Bentrup & Jan-Michael Hökenschnieder**

Music **NOIA**