KINONIK

BOYS DON'T CRY (1999)

Directed by Kimberly Peirce

WEDNESDAY July 16th 7PM



“Brandon’s body…is a site for truth.”

Kimberly Peirce’s **Boy’s Don’t Cry** is the biopic of Brandon Teena, a young trans man who was sexually assaulted and murdered in 1993 Nebraska. After hearing about the case in college, Peirce immersed herself in research and scriptwriting, spending five years on the screenplay she would eventually finish with the assistance of Andy Bienen. Pushing through casting, financing, and censorship difficulties, the film was released in 1999 to commercial and critical success. A landmark film in humanizing depictions of the trans experience and oppression, it continues to be a focus of discussion and debate today and an important entry in the history of LGBTQ+ cinema.

Determined to make his story neither a pure tragedy, nor to mythologize Brandon, Peirce approached all aspects of production with great care. It took four years and over a hundred auditions to finally cast Hilary Swank in the lead role, who was a relatively unknown actress at the time. Seeking to create an "artificial night” within the film, Peirce opted away from moonlight effects, instead aiming for a neo-realist style that evoked the effects of long-exposure photography. Influenced heavily by Bonnie and Clyde, Raging Bull, and The Pawnbroker, **Boys Don’t Cry** takes both dreamlike and brutal visual turns as it traces Brandon’s violently thwarted attempts to live and love authentically.

A film that is frustratingly relevant today, **Boys Don’t Cry** is not your normal movie night out, but rather one of those, “films that rearrange your head, that challenge your bedrock ideas about life and love and the big sleep.” In addition to the opportunity to see this movie on 16mm film, Kinonik will also be collecting donations for *Maine Trans Net* at the screening.

Trivia: Instead of trivia for this screening, we recommend folks check out the 2020 Netflix documentary Disclosure as a companion piece–it’s a great doc that explores the depiction of trans people throughout film history, as well as the casting and treatment of trans actors in the industry. It provides some good insight and commentary on Boys Don’t Cry from trans folks.