



PREVIEW

Bodies Bodies Bodies

A group of rich twentysomething friends gather together to wait out a hurricane at a party in a remote family mansion. The air is already hostile, with old fallouts and unspoken grievances rising to the surface, even before a tense round of murder-in-the-dark game 'Bodies Bodies Bodies' turns deadly. Halina Reijn's smart, satirical comedy-horror, based on a Kristen Roupenian story (author of viral sensation *Cat Person*), with a stellar cast including Amandla Stenberg (*The Hate U Give*), Maria Bakalova (*Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*) Rachel Sennott (*Shiva Baby*) and Pete Davidson (*Saturday Night Live*), playfully explores the paranoia and hyper-individualism of an extremely online generation. With a plot that's always one step ahead and an abundance of enjoyable performances – in particular, the impeccable comic timing of Sennott – you're guaranteed a blast.

Kimberley Sheehan, Events Programmer, bfi.org.uk

From director Halina Reijn (*Instinct*) comes the razor-sharp comedy and slasher-freakout *Bodies Bodies Bodies*. With a hurricane bearing down, a group of rich 20-somethings hole up in a remote family mansion stocked with food, flashlights, and drugs, ready to party their way through the storm. Sophie (Amandla Stenberg) has brought her new girlfriend Bee (Maria Bakalova) to meet her childhood friend, David (Pete Davidson), his girlfriend, Emma (Chase Sui Wonders), and their friends Jordan (Myha'la Herrold) and Alice (Rachel Sennott), who's brought her older (as in 40-year-old) boyfriend, Greg (Lee Pace).

As night falls, lines are railed, and simmering grudges resurface, and the group decides to play one of their favourite games: Bodies Bodies Bodies. One player is designated the murderer, the lights go out, a victim gets tapped on the shoulder, and everyone tries to guess who the killer was. But when the house's power is cut, and people start getting killed for real, the old friends must survive the night and find the murderer in their midst – if they can just get over themselves first.

The second feature and English language debut by Dutch director Halina Reijn, *Bodies Bodies Bodies* introduces a fresh and indelible filmmaking voice. Reijn expertly combines a propulsive and fiercely funny mystery with an incisive portrait of fake friends, backstabbing, and privilege – a story of paranoia and not-so-secret insecurities that mines every bit of humour from a tightly-wound Gen Z meltdown.

Explains Reijn, 'It's meant to be an honest look at the times we live in. On one level, it's designed to be a very entertaining film, but it's also about sex and power, group dynamics, and, above all, honesty.'

Reijn taps into the anxieties, uncertainties, and hysteria of a generation reared on social media, miscommunication, and the shifting definition of friendship. She comments, 'The film depicts both the toxicity but also the seduction of a friend group. We all live in a world where we're not actually looking at each

other or seeing what's going on. The characters in the film, they're not really looking at what's taking place; they're just reacting, and that becomes almost a hysteria. Under pressure, we're much more driven by our primal urges than we would like to think.'

Notes Rachel Sennott, one of the stars of the film: 'Everyone in this enclosed setting is experiencing extreme paranoia and turning on each other as all these little dramas within the friend group start percolating up. It turns into a nightmare very quickly.'

A thriller that mines the comedic core of bad relationships, *Bodies Bodies Bodies* places several characters in extreme duress under one roof as a storm rages outside. Over the course of a single dark and bloody night, an unknown killer – one of their own – up the body count during a make-believe game turned real.

'These people have a deep love for one another; otherwise they wouldn't be in the same place riding out a storm together,' says Myha'la Herrold, one of the film's stars. 'But as the storm approaches, suspicion mounts, and deep-seated resentment reaches a fever pitch. It doesn't help that these people are strung-out beyond belief.'

Pete Davidson plays David, the cocky, coke-snorting host whose absent parents own the McMansion where the bacchanalian gathering plays out. 'David has the use of this big house, and his friends don't really like him – they just use him for the party pad,' says Davidson. 'As the night goes on, his relationship with his sweet but very confused girlfriend becomes increasingly volatile.'

David's girlfriend, Emma (Chase Sui Wonders), is an actress and natural mediator who has been dating David for six years. 'Emma is deeply invested in being liked by her peers and doesn't try to rock the boat too much,' says Wonders. 'She has a darkness that verges on masochism which she masks behind this calm and poised veneer. As the group starts playing the game, freakish incidents happen, and you realise these relationships are teetering on the verge of total destruction.'

Twentysomething Alice (Rachel Sennott) is a garrulous podcast host lacking self-awareness who met fortysomething Greg (Lee Pace) on Tinder and thinks nothing of dropping the older man into her close-knit circle of friends. 'I was interested in the dynamic of this friend group because it examines the way people stay in toxic friendships,' says Sennott. 'They hold stuff down until everything surfaces with a vengeance. The writing felt very true to my generation.'

As gregarious, fun-loving Greg, the lone grown-up in the room, Lee Pace injects intergenerational tension, playing a 40-year-old who tries to fit in with a younger crowd. 'Greg is adventurous and carefree and all about good vibes, but he is ultimately struggling with these people,' says Pace. 'Like the movie itself, they are all about chaos, privilege, self-obsession, and youth culture. Young as he appears, Greg can't keep up.'

Type-A striver Jordan (Myha'la Herrold) is the lone singleton of the bunch who harbours residual longings for Sophie (Amandla Stenberg), who has brought

her shy, unassuming working-class girlfriend Bee (Maria Bakalova) into what quickly becomes a scheming nest of vipers.

‘There’s an interesting and unspoken dynamic between these former girlfriends that bubbles and froths into sexual tension,’ says Herrold. ‘Amandla plays Sophie with an intensity that is so visceral it surfaces in her eyes every time she appears with me in a scene. Getting to play off that was incredible.’

A square peg from the opening scenes of the movie, Bee is the quiet outsider who doesn’t have any context or back story for the teeming hive she’s stumbled into. ‘We see these friendships that were built up over years, and it seems like they don’t trust or even like each other,’ says Bakalova. ‘For my character, it becomes a question of what we do for the people we love when we have a fear of disappointing them.’

Production notes

BODIES BODIES BODIES

Directed by: Halina Reijn

Production Company: 2AM

Presented by: A24

Executive Producers: Amandla Stenberg, Sarah DeLappe, Sebastian Bear-McClard, Dani Bernfeld, Christine D’Souza Gelb, Jacob Jaffke

Produced by: David Hinojosa, Ali Herting

Co-producers: Lara Costa-Calzado, Tatiana Bears

Casting by: Laura Rosenthal, Jodi Angstreich

Screenplay by: Sarah DeLappe

Based on a story by: Kristen Roupenian

Director of Photography: Jasper Wolf

Editor: Taylor Levy, Julia Bloch

Production Designer: April Lasky

Costume Designer: Katina Danabassis

Music by: Disasterpeace

Music Supervisor: Meghan Currier

Cast

Amandla Stenberg (*Sophie*)

Maria Bakalova (*Bee*)

Myha’la Herrold (*Jordan*)

Chase Sui Wonders (*Emma*)

Rachel Sennott (*Alice*)

Lee Pace (*Greg*)

Pete Davidson (*David*)

Conner O’Malley (*Max*)

USA 2022

94 mins

A Sony Pictures release

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Oxide Ghosts: The Brass Eye Tapes + Q&A with director Michael Cumming

Tue 6 Sep 20:45

Preview: The Score + Q&A with director Malachi Smyth, actor Johnny Flynn plus further guests to be announced

Wed 7 Sep 18:00

TV Preview: Cunk on Earth + Q&A with writer, exec producer Charlie Brooker, actor Diane Morgan and Series Producer Sam Ward

Wed 7 Sep 20:40

Pam Grier in Conversation

Fri 9 Sep 18:00

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 12 Sep 18:30

S.O.U.L. Fest x ABFF London 2022

Fri 16 & Sat 17 Sep

TV Preview: Inside Man + Q&A with David Tennant, Stanley Tucci, Dolly Wells, Lydia West, writer Steven Moffat and director Paul McGuigan

Mon 19 Sep 18:15

BUG 64

Fri 23 Sep 20:45; Thu 29 Sep 20:45

TV Preview: Don’t Hug Me I’m Scared + Panel + Q&A with Creators Becky Sloan, Joseph Pelling and Baker Terry, Executive Producer James Stevenson Bretton, Producers Hugo Donkin and Charlie Perkins (Channel 4 Head of Comedy)

Wed 28 Sep 20:45

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