

'Lez Bomb': Film Review | Hollywood Reporter

🌐 Web Clip

'Lez Bomb': Film Review

2:34 PM PST 11/7/2018 by Frank Scheck



THE BOTTOM LINE

The solid ensemble of veteran comic actors makes it work. □

11/9/2018

A closeted young woman brings her girlfriend home for

ADVERTISEMENT

Thanksgiving in this raucous comedy written, directed by and starring Jenna Laurenzo.

Dysfunctional family comic tropes are given a fresh twist with Jenna Laurenzo's feature directorial debut in which she also stars. The writer-director-actor plays the lead role of Lauren, a young lesbian woman who decides to reveal her relationship with her girlfriend Hailey (Caitlin Mehner) to her family over Thanksgiving dinner. Other than that main plot element, there's nothing in *Lez Bomb* that you haven't seen before. But a solid ensemble, including many acting veterans, manages to make the film, on which Bobby Farrelly served as one of the executive producers, a diverting holiday comedy.

Lauren is enjoying domestic bliss with Hailey in their Brooklyn apartment, which they share with Austin (Brandon Micheal Hall, currently starring on CBS' *God Friended Me*). So it makes sense that she would finally come out to her parents (Deirdre O'Connell, Kevin Pollak) with whom she has a close, loving relationship. But as anyone who has seen such films as *Home for the Holidays* or *Meet the Parents* can guess, comedic complications ensue.

Before Lauren musters up the courage to break the news, Austin shows up unexpectedly at the holiday gathering in suburban New Jersey, prompting her parents to assume that he's Lauren's boyfriend. Her brother (Davram Stiefler), thinking Hailey is unattached, immediately begins hitting on her. Lauren's precocious young cousin (Jordyn DiNatale) makes not so subtle overtures to a flustered Austin. Her uncle (Steve Guttenberg) accidentally causes a fire while sneakily smoking a joint in the bathroom, leading the family to relocate to their family-owned motel. Other characters figuring in the cluttered proceedings include her elderly grandfather (Bruce Dern) and grandmother (Cloris Leachman), the latter assuming that Lauren, Hailey and Austin are in a polyamorous relationship, and her aunt (Elaine Hendrix), who shows some curiosity about Lauren's lifestyle. "What is scissoring?" she asks, mainly concerned that she's fit enough to engage in it.

As if things weren't crazy enough, there's a subplot involving a mysterious woman who keeps showing up in a van in the motel parking lot and may be up to no good. And if you think the Thanksgiving turkey goes unscathed, you haven't seen enough holiday-themed comedies.

The writer-director-star piles up more farcical plot elements than she can comfortably handle. And many of the situations, such as Lauren's father being hostile to his daughter's presumed boyfriend and constantly

sneaking food, would have felt tired in a vintage sitcom. Not to mention that any time any of the characters get into a romantic clinch, someone walks in on them with disastrous results.

But it's all pretty easy to take nonetheless, thanks to the brisk pacing and often very amusing dialogue that's made even funnier as delivered by such comic pros as Pollak, Leachman and Dern, each displaying the sort of expert deadpan delivery and timing that comes from years of experience. The younger performers, including Laurenzo, are very appealing, as is O'Connell, a NYC theatrical treasure who's been given too little opportunity to shine onscreen.

Lez Bomb may traffic in cliches, but it delivers its messages of love, tolerance and acceptance in such light-hearted, warm fashion that the missteps are easy to overlook.

Production companies: Sprockefeller Pictures, Dungeon Beach, Fair Lila Films, PM Productions, The Film House

Distributor: Gravitas Ventures

Cast: Jenna Laurenzo, Caitlin Mehner, Brandon Micheal Hall, Steve Guttenberg, Elaine Hendrix, Deirdre O'Connell, Rob Moran, Davram Stiefler, Bruce Dern, Kevin Pollack, Cloris Leachman

Director-screenwriter: Jenna Laurenzo

Producers: Ryan R. Johson, Jenna Laurenzo, Rob Moran, Martin Sprock

Executive producers: Alex Cirillo, Bobby Farrelly, Dani Faith Leonard

Director of photography: Gabriel Stanley

Production designer: David Butler

Editor: Bill Saunders

Composer: P.T. Walkley

Costume designer: Bree Perry

Casting: Mia Cusumano, Meghan Rafferty

90 minutes



FRANK SCHECK

✉ thrnews@thr.com

✉ [@thr](#)



