

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FILM

An intimate portrait of a real Modern Family: Meet Erik and Sandro, a gay couple with daughters birthed by their friend Rachel who's married with three teenagers of her own.

SHORTER SYNOPSIS

THE GUYS NEXT DOOR is an intimate portrait of a real "Modern Family:" Meet Erik and Sandro, a gay married couple whose friend Rachel is a surrogate for their two daughters. Rachel, who is in her 40s, is married to Tony and they have three children. Together, they form a unique extended family.

Spanning over three years, this lyrical documentary tackles some of the most pertinent issues of our time: gay marriage and parenting, surrogacy as a path to having children, and the extension and redefinition of what it means to be "an American family." Elegantly shot and edited, and told with candor and humor, **THE GUYS NEXT DOOR** is an inspiring story of family, friendship and gay rights.

LONGER SYNOPSIS

THE GUYS NEXT DOOR, a feature length documentary, offers an alternative to the traditional ideas of what constitute the nuclear American family. Meet Erik and Sandro, a gay couple with two daughters birthed by their friend Rachel with donor eggs. In her 40s, Rachel is married to Tony and they have three biological children of their own.

Rachel and Tony, a seemingly traditional married couple, live in the suburbs of Massachusetts with their children. Inspired by a TV program about the difficulties and costs associated with gay couples having children, Rachel, age 41, volunteers to be a surrogate – not once, but twice within two years – for Erik, her good friend from college, and his husband Sandro, an Italian émigré.

This film begins when Rachel is eight months pregnant with Erik and Sandro's second daughter, Eleonora. What compels a woman in her forties with three children of her own to carry children for friends? What is the reaction of her husband and children? And, how will Erik and Sandro handle the challenges of parenting two girls in a world that still emphasizes the importance of maternal instinct?

The issues raised in this film - gay marriage and parenting, surrogacy as a path for having children, and the extension and redefinition of what it means to be "an American family" - are particularly relevant in today's socio/political climate where we are witnessing new threats to the civil liberties of LGBTQ community. The power of **THE GUYS NEXT DOOR** is the way it demonstrates our shared humanity. In the words of the esteemed documentary filmmaker Ross McElwee (Sherman's March), "with nuance, verve and humor, this film goes well beyond issues of surrogacy and gay parenthood and explores the humanity that connects us all.

[WATCH THE TRAILER HERE](#)

MEET THE GUYS NEXT DOOR

Sandro grew up Catholic on the remote island of Sardinia in Italy. Fearful of being rejected, Sandro never came out to his mother, who died just weeks before he met Erik in New York. Now a father, Sandro experiences a profound parental shift and begins to reevaluate his relationship with his mother.

Erik, like Sandro, has a complicated relationship with his mother Ellie. Her homophobic upbringing made her fear her son's apparent homosexuality. She adored Erik but discouraged any perceived feminine behavior when he was a child. It was difficult for Erik to "come out," in part because he internalized his mother's homophobia. He does not want to pass this onto his children.

Erik and Sandro live in Maine with their two daughters - Rachel Maria and Eleonora.

Rachel and Tony, a traditional married couple, live in the Boston suburbs with their three teenage children. But there's nothing traditional about Rachel's decision, at 41, to become a surrogate for Erik, her friend from college, and his husband Sandro. Not once, but twice within 2 years.

By helping her gay friends to have daughters, Rachel makes the deeply personal political. With the support of Tony and their children, she affirms gay rights and same-sex parenting.

CAST

Erik Mercer

Sandro Sechi

Rachel Segall

Tony Hurley

Jordie Hurley

Maddie Hurley

Zeke Hurley

Eleonora Francesca Sechi Mercer

Rachel Maria Sechi Mercer

Ellie Mercer

Clare Segall

MEET THE FILMMAKERS

Download high-resolution [photos here](#)



AMY GELLER

Director/Producer/Sound Recordist

Amy Geller has been producer and line producer on numerous commercials, shorts and documentaries, including the PBS/BBC broadcast docudrama “Murder at Harvard.” She also produced the Sundance Institute-supported narrative “Stay Until Tomorrow”, “The War That Made America,” a four-hour PBS mini-series broadcast in 2006, and “Love and Other Anxieties”, a personal documentary directed by funder-turned-filmmaker Lyda Kuth. Geller’s most ambitious production to date, the feature documentary “For the Love of Movies: The Story of American Film Criticism,” has screened at over 80 film festivals, theaters, and universities in the US and abroad. It was broadcast internationally in Spain, France, Israel, and Japan and nationally on the Documentary Channel and WGBH-Boston. She has taught classes at Boston University and Emerson College. Most recently, Geller served as the Artistic Director of the Boston Jewish Film Festival. **THE GUYS NEXT DOOR** is her feature-length directorial debut.



ALLIE HUMENUK

Director/Producer/Director of Photography

Allie Humenuk is an award-winning filmmaker and Emmy nominated cinematographer whose films have been broadcast nationally and internationally and screened at film festivals, museums and schools. Her feature documentary, “Shadow of the House,” about the photographer Abelardo Morell was heralded as “one of the best films ever made on a artist and artistic process” by Bo Smith, former curator of the film program at the MFA Boston. She was nominated for an Emmy for her camera work on the PBS series “Design Squad.” For over 15 years Allie was the Executive Producer at Vida Health Communications where she created media about public health issues. She has taught film and video production at Harvard University and the Massachusetts College of Art. Currently, she freelances as a Director, Cinematographer and Editor. **THE GUYS NEXT DOOR** is her second feature film.

SCREENING FORMAT

Runtime: 74 minutes

Screening format: DCP, Blu-ray

LIST OF FILM FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Sarasota Film Festival – Runner-up, Florida Audience Award
Independent Film Festival of Boston
Maryland Film Festival
Provincetown International Film Festival
Maine International Film Festival
Woods Hole Film Festival – Winner, Audience Award for Best Documentary
Rhode Island International Film Festival – Winner Alternative Spirit Award (LGBT films)
Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival – Winner, Audience Award for Best Feature
Newburyport Documentary Film Festival
Tampa Bay International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Yes Film Festival (Columbus, Indiana), Jury Prize, Best Documentary
Fairhope Film Festival (Alabama), Jury Prize, Best Documentary
DOC NYC
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
Wicked Queer: Boston LGBT Film Festival
River Run (Winston Salem, NC)
Monadnock Film Festival (Keene, NH)
Washington DC Jewish Film Festival



PRESS IMAGES

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Photograph by Lorenzo Ciniglio



For more information, please go to: <http://theguysnextdoorthemovie.com/>