

WHEN WE WERE BOYS

Directed by Sarah Goodman

World premiere at Hot Docs 2009

Friday, May 1, 9pm, Cumberland 3

Sunday, May 10, 4pm, Bloor Cinema

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

At an upper class private boys' school, students make and lose friends, create a pecking order, and begin their individual paths to manhood. Within the adolescent culture of boys their emotional struggles lie beneath the surface, often unspoken to each other or to the adults around them.

LONG SYNOPSIS

At an elite private boys' school, students make and lose friends, create a pecking order, and begin their individual paths to manhood. The adolescent culture of boys lies beneath the surface, an emotional world often unspoken to each other or to the adults around them. The boys and the adults sometimes seem to exist on separate planes. 'To whom much is given, much is expected' is impressed upon this privileged group, but their thoughts are elsewhere.

In the schoolyard they are still boys- throwing snowballs at each other and roughhousing. They whisper at the back of the class and run through the halls when they should be studying. In the choir, their voices are beginning to crack, and in the cafeteria the conversations turn more and more to girls. One moment, they seem like children, the next like the men they will become. The film gradually centers on the friendship of two boys- Noah and Colin- best friends since grade school. Noah is a sincere, polite boy, the star of the choir; Colin is a charming troublemaker who makes the choirmaster's life difficult.

Colin and Noah hang out at each other's houses as a matter of course, but as adolescence kicks in their differences become magnified and they drift apart. Meanwhile, school life goes on: there is the spring dance; grade eight graduation; a class trip to Spain; summertime diversions. Grade nine begins, and Colin seems more interested in his new friends. They study 'Lord of the Flies' in English class, while in the lunchroom Noah becomes the odd man out. The boys are defining themselves in contrast to each other: Who is cooler? Who is doing what? Who is growing up faster? As the film progresses, Noah seeks other friends beyond Colin's circle.

As they grow into young men their paths become more solitary. Childhood seems to be fading away. But something changes in Grade 10, and **WHEN WE WERE BOYS** returns one year later to a surprisingly poignant resolution between Noah and Colin.

SARAH GOODMAN

Sarah Goodman's first feature documentary film *ARMY OF ONE* was the winner of the Hot Docs International Documentary Festival Award for Best Canadian Feature in 2004, and she was nominated for a Gemini for Best Director the same year. The film aired internationally, including Discovery Times Channel, BBC, The Documentary Channel, IFC, and the CBC, and released theatrically in New York, Toronto, and Vancouver, as well as touring festivals worldwide.

Goodman's latest feature, **WHEN WE WERE BOYS**, about the adolescent culture of boys at an elite private boys' school. is produced by Nomad Films in association with *documentary* and is premiering at HotDocs in May 2009.

Goodman is also developing a feature documentary about JFK's speechwriter Ted Sorensen, entitled *MAN OF HIS WORD*, with producer Danny Iron, in association with Documentary. Goodman is making her debut as a writer/director of dramatic fiction with the feature script *BRIDGING* which she co-wrote. *BRIDGING* is being produced by Triptych Media and Federgreen Entertainment; has received support from Telefilm and the Harold Greenberg Fund and is slated for production in summer 2010.

Goodman also writes and directs non-fiction episodic television for History Television, BBC, Discovery, and the W Network.

AMANDA HANDY

Amanda joined Nomad Films in 2007 as a Partner and Producer. Successfully leveraging her diverse film and television experience, Amanda has created and implemented a number of initiatives to position Nomad as a leading company in the film and television industry.

As one of the companies' partners Amanda's focus is not only on the company's development, production and distribution activities, but also on the strategic development of the business, the company's marketing and branding, and also overseeing operations, human resources and publicity.

Since joining Nomad Amanda has worked as a producer on the critically acclaimed THE AL QAEDA CODE, and is currently producing the ambitious four-part documentary series EMPIRE OF THE WORD.

Other major upcoming projects include dramatic feature films such as the Afghan film ACT OF DISHONOUR, directed by Nelofer Pazira and co-produced with Dan Iron of Foundry Films (AWAY FROM HER) and IN THE SHADOW OF A SAINT, which tells the story of Nigerian writer and martyr, Ken Saro-Wiwa and is slated for production in 2008 with Oscar-nominated actor Djimon Hounsou playing Saro-Wiwa. Triptych Media (EMOTIONAL ARITHMETIC, THE HANGING GARDEN) will co-produce.

Amanda has experience in all aspects of the film and television industry, having worked in a variety of executive and production capacities for some of the most significant production companies in Toronto. Amanda began her work in the industry by working with Jay Firestone, the company Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Fireworks Entertainment, Amanda's next stop was Cinenova, one of Canada's largest documentary film production companies, where she acted as the Corporate Co-coordinator. Amanda then worked as Director of Development and Marketing and Business Affairs Manager for one of Canada's most successful television drama production companies, Screen Door. Most recently, Amanda was Director of Business Affairs, for Media Headquarters, one of Toronto's best producers of documentary and factual entertainment programming.

MARK JOHNSTON

Mark has produced, directed and written many documentaries such as **IN THE SHADOW OF A SAINT** (BBC, CBC); **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SARAH MCLACHLAN** (CBC); **JEAN'S MARINES** (W Network); **BEETALKER** (CBC's Nature of Things, ARTE France); **RIDDLE OF THE POLAR SKY** (Discovery Science, WDR ARTE), **THE CLIMB** (CBC, National Geographic Canada, Discovery HD) and most recently, **THE AL QAEDA CODE**, a thrilling documentary for CBC,ZDF/ARTE and SBS Australia that looks at the use of the Internet to train and recruit jihadists around the world. His producing work for Nomad includes a number of feature documentaries: **THE MAN WHO BECAME KING** (CBC, National Geographic International and Sundance Channel) and **WHEN WE WERE BOYS** (Documentary Channel).

Mark is currently post-producing the four-part documentary **EMPIRE OF THE WORD** for TVO, SBS Australia, TG4 Ireland and TFO, about the impact of reading and writing on human history.

Nomad recently completed shooting the feature film, **Act of Dishonour**, directed by Nelofer Pazira and coproduced with Daniel Iron of Foundry Films (**AWAY FROM HER**, **MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES**).

Other major upcoming projects include the dramatic feature film **In the Shadow of a Saint**, which tells the story of Nigerian writer and martyr, Ken Saro-Wiwa. It is slated for production in Fall, 2009 with Oscar-nominated actor Djimon Hounsou as Saro-Wiwa. Triptych Media (**EMOTIONAL ARITHMETIC**, **THE HANGING GARDEN**) will co-produce.