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IDE STORY cast



OUTFEST AT 2



LAUGHING MATTERS THE MEN

STARRBOOTY

THE CURIOSITY OF CHANCE

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* Bill Richardson's "Maricón" Moment * Ex-Gays and Ex-Gay Survivors Meet in O.C. *

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René Alvarado, Steve Callahan and Cory Alan Schneider make up a torrid love triangle in *East Side Story*. Outfest will screen the film at noon on Sunday, July 22, at the Regent Showcase Theater (614 N. La Brea Ave., L.A.). We chat with the director, Carlos Portugal (not pictured), to discuss his sizzling new movie.

Carlos, tell our readers about your film *East Side Story*.

In one sentence: *East Side Story* is a sexy, romantic tale about a young Latino stuck in a comedic tug-of-war between his closeted Latino culture and the openly gay lifestyle of the white Anglos gentrifying his neighborhood.

That's quite a sentence! What inspired you to write the film?

I wanted to do a "serious" comedy about what it's like to be a dual minority in the United States—in my case, gay and Latino. Probably the smartest decision I made was turning to Charo Toledo, a great friend and wonderful playwright, to help me

write the screenplay. Because of our busy work schedules, it took us nine months to write it. We joke that it's our baby—it took nine months from conception to birth.

Did incidents in your own life inspire it?

Well ... though *East Side Story* is *not* autobiographical, I do share a number of similarities with Diego, the protagonist. We were both raised by our grandmothers. We both have sexy, love-starved aunts. We both have been on the down low with "straight" Latinos. We both have dated Anglos. And we are both into role-playing. By the way, you'll have to see the movie to get the last one.

What do you see as the theme of the film?

One word: change. Also, how, if you are willing to change, you'll probably evolve into something better. And if you don't change, you'll wind up dying or having to leave the neighborhood, which is what happens to all the characters who refuse to adapt to all the changes around them.

Is the East Side of Los Angeles, with its heavily Hispanic population, in danger of being gentrified?

Absolutely. Boyle Heights is going to be the next Silver Lake and Echo Park. Remember, you heard it here first!

How has response to the film been?

Amazing. It's been invited to every LGBT and Latino film festival in the country. People love the movie. And not just gay men, but also straight Latinos and white men. It's a movie about love and acceptance with a very universal theme that people can relate to. It's won a number of awards, including audience favorite in both gay and Latino film festivals.

Terrific! What's most gratifying about your film included in Outfest?

East Side Story is a movie about Los Angeles. Granted, it's a side of Los Angeles that you don't often see in movies, since most people who make movies in Hollywood seem to know the West Side, where everybody is straight and white. My movie celebrates the diversity that exists in the city. It's a pleasure to have my movie shown in a theater where the audience is from Los Angeles.





René

Cory

Steve