

Pillion

2025 | 107mins

Director: Harry Lighton

Starring: Harry Melling, Lesley Sharpe, Alexander Skarsgard

An intriguing mix of British comedic moments, emotional depth and insight, *Pillion* is a gay biker romance film, adapted from Adam Mars-Jones' novel *Box Hill* (2020).

The film directorial debut of Harry Lighton, the film charts the relationship between Colin (Harry Melling), a sweetly shy traffic enforcement officer, and Ray (Alexander Skarsgard), a regally distant, leather-clad biker. Their relationship soon takes on a classic BDSM master-and-servant dynamic as Colin is introduced to the physical and sexual delights of both riding pillion on Ray's motorbike, and role-playing as Ray's submissive. As Colin continues to fall deeply in love with Ray, his ongoing journey into this particular sub-culture gets more fraught as the line between abuse / coercive control and love starts to blur and his family begins to fear for him...

Referencing and building upon previous homoerotic biker flicks (*The Leather Boys* (1964), *The Loveless* (1981)) the film deftly portrays Colin's journey into maturity and eventual self-acceptance, alongside very English in-jokes (Colin and Ray's first sexual encounter is at the back of Primark).

Despite this, it does not shy away from the darker side of Colin and Ray's relationship when Colin's terminally ill mother Peggy, (played with wit and bite by Lesley Sharpe) calls him out as a potential abuser. With the film ending with Colin's father's barbershop quartet singing 'Smile Though Your Heart Is Breaking', the film is an impressive debut from Lighton and bodes well for future work.

'Something funny and touching and alarming – like a cross between Alan Bennett and Tom of Finland with perhaps a tiny smidgen of what could be called a BDSM Wallace and Gromit'.

-The Guardian

Excellent

Fair

Poor



What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

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Did You Know?

- Ray’s biker gang in the film is portrayed by the real Gay Bikers Motorcycle Club, or GBMCC who also acted as film advisors. To get a sense of what it was like to be in their lifestyle, director Harry Lighton joined them for a weekend of biking.
- *Pillion* also marks the acting debut of singer Jake Shears from Scissors Sisters with casting director Kathleen Crawford being impressed by Shears’ turn in the 2021 revival of *Cabaret*.
- The film was shown in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival, and it earned a seven minute standing ovation.

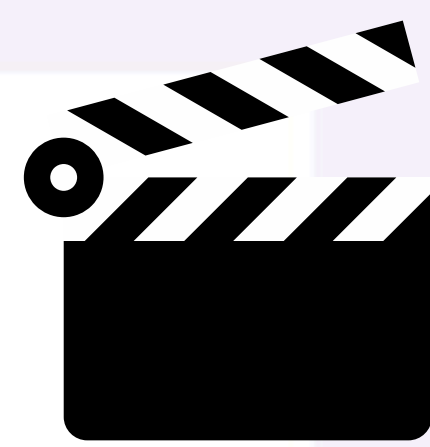
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