

AJ Goes to the Dog Park



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OFFICIAL WEBSITE

OFFICIAL STILLS

80 MINS / COMEDY / UNITED STATES / ENGLISH / 2024

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LOGLINE

When AJ's favorite dog park in Fargo, North Dakota is taken away, it begins a chain reaction that upends his life and sends him on an unforgettable odyssey to fight, fish, scrap, scrape and sap things back into place in this surreal comedy.

SUMMARY

In humdrum Fargo, North Dakota, an ordinary man named AJ (AJ Thompson) wakes up on the right side of the bed every day. Content with his mundane existence, his simple routine consists of buttering cinnamon toast for breakfast, eating dinner with his married best friends, and visiting his favorite dog park with his beloved chihuahuas, Diddy and Biff. AJ rejects any interruption to his tranquility, including a promotion at work – offered by his boss who happens to be his dad, but still. Unfortunately, the despotic local mayor has converted his dog park into a “blog park” – where happy dog walkers have been replaced with corporate stooges hunched over their laptops. Thus begins a chain reaction that completely upends AJ's existence as he trains to embark on an unforgettable odyssey to fight, fish, scrap, scrape and sap things back into place. Toby Jones (Regular Show, OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes!) brings the zany, gag-driven joy of cartoons to this surreal, no-budget testament to the average Joe.



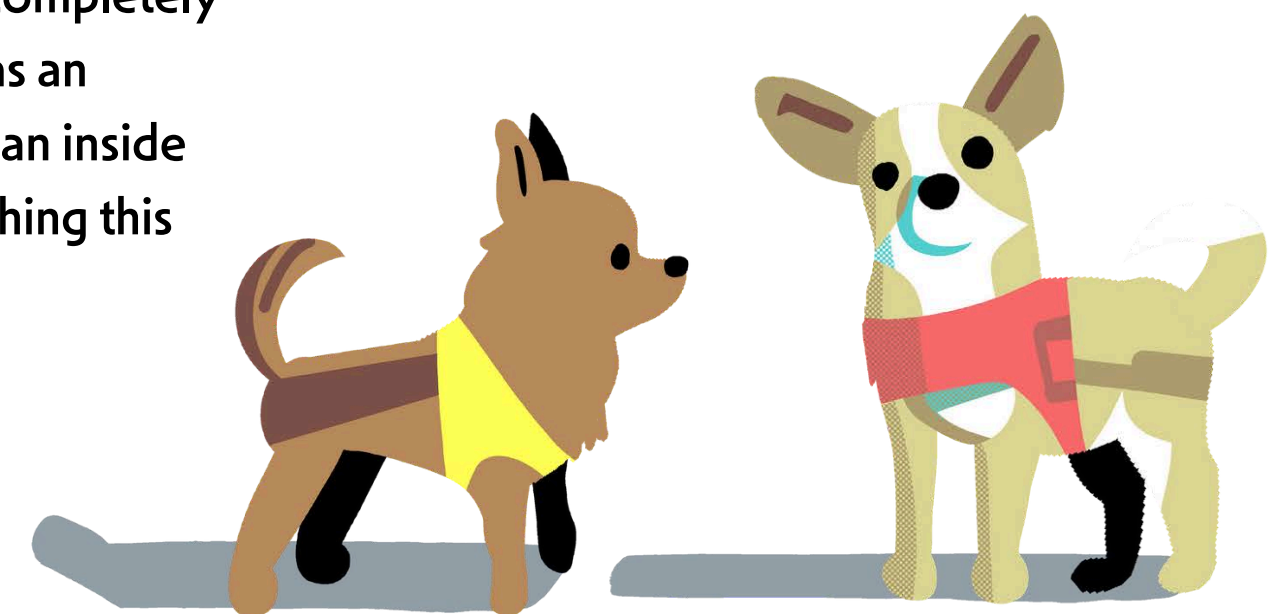
DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My friends and I have always been obsessed with a good gag. Growing up in Fargo, North Dakota we spent weekend after weekend creating videos – be it a local access show or a miniDV feature – with the sole purpose of making each other laugh. Nothing was ever as satisfying as coming up with something impossibly absurd and putting it on tape, regardless of our complete lack of resources. The act of making something completely unchecked, with no concern for appealing to anyone other than ourselves, felt like a rebellious and cathartic act.

AJ GOES TO THE DOG PARK attempts to capture some of that feeling. After working in the animation industry for over a decade, I started writing the script for fun, just to amuse myself on nights and weekends. I decided to reach out to that same group of friends to ask if they'd be interested in making it. While we had all kept in touch over the years, I was still shocked and delighted that everyone was totally game for an endeavor of this scale.

We worked with a team of local friends and family to make AJ GOES TO THE DOG PARK completely independently, shooting off and on for three years during my visits to Fargo, ND. While it was an immense challenge, I'm happy to say that it makes us laugh. The movie's biggest joke may be an inside joke: that a group of people dedicated themselves so completely for so long to create something this absurd.

– Toby Jones



MAKING AJ GOES TO THE DOG PARK

I started writing AJ GOES TO THE DOG PARK as a lark, a way to amuse myself during nights and weekends while working in the animation industry. I had been spending a lot of time and effort pitching projects, and started getting restless with the process of trying to sell something instead of making it. Realizing it might be possible to return to my hometown of Fargo, North Dakota and shoot AJ GOES TO THE DOG PARK completely independently, I reached out to the same group of friends I made Hi-8 movies and local access shows with in high school to see if they were interested. Much to my surprise, they were completely game. What followed was three years of shooting, pulling together a team of professional and non-professional local talent to create a completely absurd, proudly handmade comedy that also turned out to kind of be an accidental requiem for my twenties.







ABOUT TOBY JONES

Toby Jones is an Emmy and Annie nominated writer, director and cartoonist from Fargo, ND currently living in Los Angeles. He has worked as a writer and storyboard director on Regular Show, an executive producer on OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes, and a writer on Shape Island. He also has recently done work for Dreamworks, Netflix and WB. This is his first feature as director.

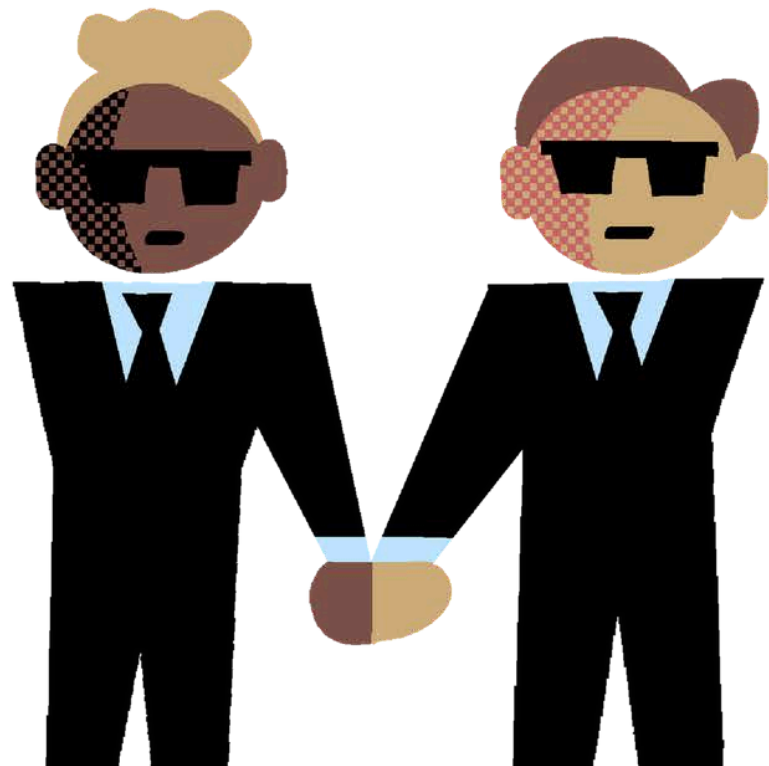


CAST

AJ	AJ Thompson
DAD	Greg Carlson
DANNY	Danny Davy
MORGAN	Morgan Hoyt Davy
THOMAS	Jason Ehlert
CAPTAIN SEASTAB	Jacob Hartje
MAYOR	Crystal Cossette Knight
SUIT AIDE 1	Zachary Lutz
SUIT AIDE 2	Whitney McClain
AJ JR.	Ethan Saari

CREW

WRITER	Toby Jones
DIRECTOR	Toby Jones
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Owen Dennis, John Jones, Toby Jones, Tucker Lucas, AJ Thompson
PRODUCER	Ben Hanson
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Tucker Lucas
EDITOR	Toby Jones





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Doppelgänger Releasing™ is the alternative, genre-inspired label of Music Box Films. Launched in 2013, Doppelgänger Releasing supports cutting-edge films that push the boundaries of genre filmmaking. Highlights include Cameron and Colin Cairnes' Slamdance award-winner 100 Bloody Acres, Lukas Feigelfeld's German horror film Hagazussa, Kiyoshi Kurosawa's Japanese horror Penance, Fabrice Du Welz's psychosexual thriller Alleluia, SXSW and Fantasia Festival favorite Heavy Trip, and the Blu-ray debut of Wes Craven's 1978 cult classic Summer of Fear. The label most recently released Heavier Trip, the sequel to cult comedy classic Heavy Trip; the Christmas horror film, You Are Not Me; and Alex Thompson's tense and chilling sophomore feature debut, Rounding.

In 2023, Music Box Films relaunched the Doppelgänger Releasing™ label, committing to more experimental and genre films. For more information, please visit www.doppelgangerreleasing.com.

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