



**PECCADILLO PICTURES PRESENTS**



## **ARE YOU PROUD?**

**Directed by Ashley Joiner**

**UK/ 95 minutes**

**Q&A Previews from 2 July  
Release Date: 26 July**

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## SYNOPSIS

The LGBTQ+ movement in the UK has fought bruising battles for equality. Directed by Ashley Joiner, *Are You Proud?* brings together rare archive footage and interviews from across a spectrum of historical campaigns to celebrate the movement's landmark achievements. Gay Pride, the Gay Liberation Front and Stonewall are among the organisations recognised in a film that doesn't just look back, but asks tough questions about the future. 50 years after the Stonewall riots in America, this is a timely moment to take stock and question how much attitudes have changed and fundamental rights have been achieved.

Although the film's many contributors are predominantly based in the UK, the issues addressed resonate across the globe. Through the prism of Pride in the UK we see the fragility of human rights, not only for the LGBTQ+ community but for everyone. *Are You Proud?* is a candid and moving investigation into seventy years of progress in the LGBTQ+ rights movement. It celebrates the many breakthroughs made by tireless individuals and it reminds us how far we have yet to go.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A few years ago, when a partner's mother, a LGBTQ+ activist, asked whether I would be attending Pride, I answered with a resounding "No". I felt a total disconnect to what I perceived Pride to be. Her response was: "You don't know your history!". She was right – I didn't. I had no knowledge of Section 28 and knew only of rumours and lies regarding the AIDS crisis. Exploring our history has helped me to understand why I grew up as an isolated young gay man filled with shame and fear. I knew I had to make this film in the effort to prevent anyone else feeling that way.

*Are You Proud?* is an exploration of a community that has tirelessly campaigned for my existence; the lives and battles fought that aren't discussed or taught in schools, of a community that I am a part of, and is a part of me. Through this journey, I found friendship, love, voice and purpose.

A work-in-progress screening at BFI FLARE 2017 was pivotal, giving the audience the opportunity to have their say in shaping the end result. What started as a film being made alone in my bedroom has now grown into a film made by the community, *for* the community.

I'd like to thank all of those who supported our Kickstarter, our Executive Producers Andy Whitmore, Glenn Scott Wright, Charlie Parsons, Andrew Su, and Bruno Wang for believing in a first time filmmaker; and Andrew Lumsden, Lisa Power, Fox Fisher, Phyll Opoko-Gyimah and Dan Glass for their advice, guidance and trust. This process has ensured *Are You Proud?* is like no other film on the LGBTQ+ community, a film that is truly reflective of who we are. And with that comes the reality that within our community there are issues and differences of opinion that have to be addressed. *Are You Proud?* is as critical of us as a community as it is of those who oppress us.

*Are You Proud ?* is the film I needed to see when I was a child, and as a young gay man coming out. Making this film has emboldened me to continue the fight that so many have fought before me, and I hope that it encourages others to do the same.

## BACKGROUND NOTES

“How can you be criminalised for being born the way you are?” asks 96 year old WWII veteran George Montague in the struggle for the freedom to be himself that began over seventy years ago. It is a struggle still faced by over 74 million people across the globe.

*Are You Proud?* meets key campaigners and investigates the organisations and events that have led to substantial progress and political reform within the UK’s LGBTQ+ liberation movement, from the Homosexual Law Reform Society in 1959 to present day.

In 2016, Pride London saw its biggest turnout in history. While some hailed the event as a vibrant, peacock-feathered platform for self-expression; others criticized its de-politicisation and mainstream commercialisation.

Our community has come a long way since the creation of the Gay Liberation Front in the 1970s. Rising national media coverage helped draw attention to significant LGBTQ+ issues of the time.

### *LESBIAN & GAYS SUPPORT THE MINERS*

Among the many contributors, we meet Gethin Roberts, one of the founding members of Lesbian & Gays Support the Miners. He shares his heart-warming account of how LGSM supported the miners protesting against mine closures in South Wales in the early 1980s. The miners became vocal advocates and loyal friends of the LGBT cause, leading the LGBT Pride Parade in 1984, encouraging the Labour Party to support LGBT rights at the Labour Party conference in Bournemouth in 1985, and offering support during the AIDS Crisis.

### *AIDS EPIDEMIC / SECTION 28*

The AIDS crisis killed more men in the United Kingdom than any other epidemic for over three hundred years. The stigma of HIV and AIDS was as damaging as the disease itself. Homosexual men became “*public enemy number one*” and the shame surrounding the disease caused many young men to suffer alone. Michael Cashman (Founding member of Stonewall, former Labour politician and current Labour Peer) recounts how many parents “*claimed back their child [...] sanitised them, heterosexualised them in their burials and their cremations, took away their history*”. The Switchboard LGBT+ helpline became a vital resource during the crisis.

In 1988, at the height of the AIDS epidemic, the shame being piled upon the gay community was solidified by Section 28, banning the “promotion” of homosexuality in schools as a “pretended family relationship”. Lesbian activists abseiled into the House of Lords to protest against this legislation, and invaded the BBC 6 O’Clock News but to no avail. The law was passed and remained in England and Wales until 2003. *Are You Proud?* meets these protesters and talks to the founding members of Stonewall, the UK’s Queer Rights Lobby, formed in direct response to Section 28.

## *LGBTQ+ EDUCATION*

The documentary investigates the lasting consequences of this policy. The film features the voices of Youtuber/LGBTQ+ activist Riyadh Khalaf, who tackles the pressing need for an LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education and Jason Jones, a global human rights activist who is fighting against archaic “buggery” laws in the Commonwealth.

## *ORLANDO ATTACK / THE ONGOING FIGHT FOR ACCEPTANCE*

In spite of the progress in LGBTQ+ acceptance, recent global events have shown that hate and homophobia are still rampant. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a lone gunman killed forty-nine people and wounded fifty-eight others in an attack on a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. It was both the deadliest mass shooting by a single shooter and the deadliest attack against LGBTQ+ people in United States history. The film documents how thousands of people assembled in the heart of Soho, London, to pay their respects and show within twenty-four hours of the attack. Son Of A Tutu, one of the co-organisers of the Soho Vigil for Orlando poignantly comments: *“The test of a true democracy is how well it protects the rights of its minorities.”*

*Are You Proud?* highlights an increasing awareness of diversity within queer communities and the importance of alternative spaces to define, celebrate and challenge specific issues such as racism, transphobia and misogyny. It includes interviews with Phyll Opoku-Gyimah (UK Black Pride), Jacob V Joyce (Queer Picnic) and Fox Fisher (Trans Pride Brighton).

*“Human rights and civil liberties are never encased in steel and cement to protect them, they actually stand upon a bed of sand, and that bed of sand can be very gently and unknowingly eroded and then..... pouff, the whole lot comes tumbling down.”*

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Director - Ashley Joiner**

Graduating from Central Saint Martins in 2012, Ashley Joiner began his career as an editor, working with commercial clients including NIKE, Toyota and Facebook as well as on music videos for artists including MIA. Ashley has since directed commercials, music videos, documentaries and digital campaigns for theatre productions. He has worked on campaigns for Grindr, TOPMAN as well as LGBT charities.

His debut feature length documentary *Are You Proud? (fka PRIDE?)* premiered at Glasgow International Film Festival in February 2019. After screening as a work in progress at BFI Flare Film Festival 2017, it was reviewed as “one of the most important LGBT films of the year” by The Independent.

In 2016 Ashley launched QUEERCIRCLE, an organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting the work of queer artists. QUEERCIRCLE has since collaborated with London’s Victoria Miro Gallery, Turner Prize nominated artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien CBE, and in 2019 will open the first dedicated studio and exhibition space in the United Kingdom for queer artists.

In December 2017, Ashley was named one of GAY Times’ “Five Queer Filmmakers to Watch Out For”.

### **Producer - Dan Cleland**

In 2009, Dan produced BIFA-nominated short film, WASHDAYS, directed by Simon Neal. The film screened at over twenty global festivals winning best narrative short at Rushes Soho Short Film Festival Having co-produced David Leon’s directorial debut, ORTHODOX, Dan participated in the Edinburgh International Film Festival Talent Network in 2014, and in 2017 was invited to join BFI Bafta Crew, SICK(ER), written/directed by Lucy Brydon and produced by Dan was commissioned by the Film London Microwave scheme with funding from the BFI and BBC Films.

In 2018 Dan participated in Sheffield International Documentary Festival’s Future Producer School alongside a new generation of documentary filmmakers. He also attended Rotterdam International Film Festival’s Cinemart : Co-Production Forum with Dean Loxton’s narrative feature debut NATHAN WON’T RIDE, the project is now in development with the BFI. Dan has a number of other narrative and documentary feature film projects in development at his production company Lions Den Films.

## CREDITS

<b>Contributor</b>	<b>Group/Affiliation</b>
Alison Camps	London Pride Committee
Andrew Lumsden	GLF (Gay Liberation Front)
Antonia Bright	Movement For Justice
Chris Smith	Labour Politician
Chryssy Hunter	Opening Doors
Dan Glass	Activist
Deacon Joy Everingham	Trans Pride Brighton, Attendee
Dimitry Spodobaev	Russian Asylum Seeker & Activist
Femi Otitoju	Lesbian Strength
Fox Fisher	Trans Pride Brighton, Organiser
George Montague	Campaigner for Pardoning Criminalised Gay Men
Gethin Roberts	LGSM
Isaac Julien, MBE	Filmmaker
Jacob V Joyce	Queer Picnic
Jason Jones	Human Rights Defender
Jennie Lazenby	Lesbian Strength
Lisa Power	Founder of Stonewall, Terence Higgins Trust, LGBT Switchboard, GLF
Matthew Todd	Journalist, Author of 'Straightjacket and Pride: The Story of the LGBT Equality Movement'
Michael Cashman, CBE	Former MEP, Politician, Activist
Michael Salter-Church	London Pride Committee
Nettie Pollard	GLF (Gay Liberation Front)
Paul Dillane	Exec Director, Kaleidoscope; Eurout London advisor
Peter Tatchell	Peter Tatchell Foundation, Activist
Phyll Opoku-Gyimah	Founder and Director, UK Black Pride
PJ Samuels -	Jamaican Asylum Seeker, Poet & Activist
Riyadh Kalaf	Youtuber/ activist

Roch McLean	Trans Pride Brighton, Speaker
Sami Cee	LGBT Against Islamophobia
Sarah McGuire	No Pride In War/ ACT UP
Sarah Savage	Trans Pride Brighton, Speaker
Simon Watney	GLF (Gay Liberation Front)
Son of a Tutu	Soho Vigil, Drag Performer
Stuart Feather	GLF (Gay Liberation Front)
Sue Sanders	Emeritus Professor Harvey Milk Foundation/ LGBT History Month founder, Schools Out
Ted Brown	GLF
Usmann Rana Mare	Activist



**Archive & Stills Courtesy of :**

George Montague  
Andrew Lumsden  
Ian Townson  
Stuart Feather  
Lisa Power  
British Pathe Ltd Getty Images  
BBC Motion Gallery  
News.Co.Uk  
Randlophe Wicker  
Ron Reid  
Stefan Dickers  
Pam Isherwood  
Bishopsgate Archive – Gordon Rainsford  
Jennie Lazenby – Jeff Cole  
Gideon Mendel  
Mike Kear  
Chris Bethell  
Jennifer Kaplan Ortiz  
Nicolas Chinardet

**Directed by** Ashley Joiner

**Produced by** Dan Cleland

**Co-Produced by** Christian Gordine

**Executive Producers:** Andy Whitmore, Glenn Scott Wright, Charlie Parsons, Andrew Su, Bruno Wang, Adam Betteridge, Interlaw Diversity Forum

**Associate Producers:** Liam Jenkins, Murray Cooper-Melchior

**Director of Photography:** Joseph Dunn

**Additional Photography:** Ben Barber, Brian Fawcett

**Edited by** Charlie Hawryliw

**Original Music by** Ruth Bulman & Daniel McBride

**Produced with the support of** Interlaw Diversity Forum, Gaydar & Gaydar Girls, Authentic Media, Bruno Wang Productions and Roundtable Films.

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