

Bottoms (film)

Bottoms is a 2023 American satirical comedy film directed by Emma Seligman, who co-wrote it with Rachel Sennott. The film stars Sennott, Ayo Edebiri, Ruby Cruz, Havana Rose Liu, Kaia Gerber, Nicholas Galitzine, Miles Fowler, Dagmara Domińczyk, and Marshawn Lynch. Its plot follows two high school senior girls who set up a fight club as a way to hook up with cheerleaders.

Bottoms premiered at South by Southwest on March 11, 2023, and was released in the United States on August 25, by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures. The film received positive reviews from critics.

Plot

PJ and Josie are unpopular best friends at Rockbridge Falls High School who are both lesbian virgins. Josie and PJ pine for popular cheerleaders Isabel and Brittany, respectively. PJ and Josie begin their school year by attending the local fair with another friend named Hazel. Josie and PJ leave early after unsuccessfully flirting with their crushes, but witness Isabel arguing with Jeff, the quarterback of the Rockbridge Falls Vikings. Isabel gets into PJ and Josie's car, and they softly bump Jeff's knees when he refuses to move out of the way. Jeff falls to the ground, feigning a severe injury.

When school starts, rumors spread that PJ and Josie were sent to juvenile detention over the summer for physically fighting Jeff. When Principal Meyers threatens them with expulsion, Josie lies that they were simply practicing for a feminist "self-defense club". PJ and Josie decide to actually set up the self-defense club with Hazel's help, though they secretly want to use it to lure attractive girls into their circle. They persuade Mr. G, a careless and disinterested teacher who is going through a divorce, to be their advisor as they assume he won't show up for the club meetings, though he does anyway. He attempts to shut the club down after witnessing its violence, but PJ and Josie manage to convince him that it's about female empowerment and he changes his mind, growing more interested in feminism as a result.

The club grows closer through their chaotic and violent practices, while PJ and Josie continue their ruse about being juvenile delinquents. Jeff's overprotective best friend Tim, a fellow Vikings



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Emma Seligman
Written by	Emma Seligman Rachel Sennott
Produced by	Elizabeth Banks Max Handelman Alison Small
Starring	Rachel Sennott Ayo Edebiri Ruby Cruz Havana Rose Liu Kaia Gerber Nicholas Galitzine Miles Fowler Dagmara Domińczyk Marshawn Lynch
Cinematography	Maria Rusche

player, suspects that PJ and Josie never went to juvie and calls local juvenile halls to confirm that there was no record of them having gone. Hazel discovers that her mother is having an affair with Jeff and tells Isabel, who breaks up with Jeff in front of the student body in the cafeteria. The club decides to vandalize Jeff's house with eggs and toilet paper, though Hazel builds a bomb that blows up his car. Tim suspects the club is responsible, and all of the club members except for PJ accept that the club will end once Tim tattles to Principal Meyers. Faced with the club's disbandment, PJ and Hazel bicker, with PJ humiliating Hazel for being a loner. The following evening, Josie invites Isabel to her room and they have sex. Meanwhile, PJ kisses Brittany, but Brittany informs her that she is straight.

At the pep rally for the upcoming football game against longtime rival Huntington High School, Tim calls on Hazel to represent the club by fighting the school's top boxer in combat. Hazel manages to hold her own for a while, but ultimately loses the fight and is severely injured. Tim reveals the lies behind PJ and Josie's "fight club" and time in juvie to the entire school. PJ and Josie argue over who was responsible for the club and fall out, leading to them being further ostracized at school and even being told off by Mr. G, who renounces feminism and goes back to his old chauvinistic ways.

Josie seeks advice from her childhood babysitter Rhodes, who reveals that per tradition, Huntington intends to kill a Rockbridge football player at the upcoming game. Hoping to prevent this, PJ and Josie rekindle their friendship, and then make up with Hazel and the rest of the girls in the club, though they are unable to recruit Isabel and Brittany. They realize Huntington High has tied several large barrels of pineapple juice into the football field's sprinkler system to kill Jeff, who is deathly allergic to pineapple.

Hazel tries to distract the audience by blowing up a tree, but the bomb fails. She and PJ manage to divert everyone's attention by publicly making out. Upon the arrival of Huntington High's team, Isabel and Brittany rejoin the club and a brutal, bloody brawl ensues between all of the football players and the fight club. Josie heroically carries Jeff off the football field to safety and falls on top of him afterwards. Josie rebuffs an honorary kiss from him. The players are beaten by the girls and several of them are killed. The sprinklers go off and Tim tastes the pineapple juice, realizing the murder plot and calls to celebrate the club for saving Jeff. Josie and Isabel embrace with a kiss. The tree bomb finally explodes, interrupting the celebration.

Edited by	Hanna Park
Music by	<u>Charli XCX</u> <u>Leo Birenberg</u> ^[1]
Production companies	<u>Orion Pictures</u> <u>Brownstone Productions</u>
Distributed by	<u>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures</u>
Release dates	March 11, 2023 (<u>SXSW</u>) August 25, 2023 (United States)
Running time	91 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$11.3 million ^[3]
Box office	\$13.6 million ^{[4][5]}

Cast

- Rachel Sennott as PJ
- Ayo Edebiri as Josie
- Ruby Cruz as Hazel Callahan
- Havana Rose Liu as Isabel
- Kaia Gerber as Brittany
- Nicholas Galitzine as Jeff

- Miles Fowler as Tim
- Marshawn Lynch as Mr. G
- Dagmara Domińczyk as Mrs. Callahan
- Punkie Johnson as Rhodes
- Zamani Wilder as Annie
- Summer Joy Campbell as Sylvie
- Virginia Tucker as Stella-Rebecca
- Wayne Péré as Principal Meyers

Production

Development and filming

In April 2021, it was announced that Seligman and Sennott were working with Orion Pictures and Brownstone Productions, with Elizabeth Banks, Max Handelman, and Alison Small producing for Brownstone, and Alana Mayo producing for Orion. It is the third collaboration between Seligman and Sennott after the 2018 short film *Shiva Baby* and its 2020 feature-length adaptation.^[6] Whilst promoting that film, Seligman described her next project as a "campy queer high school comedy in the vein of *Wet Hot American Summer* but more for a Gen-Z queer audience".^[7]

Seligman faced significant difficulties during the processes of pitching, shooting and editing *Bottoms*, the bulk of which were due to the potentially alienating nature of the film's overtly sexual, lesbian premise. She and Sennott received a number of rejections while introducing the concept to various studios, and often were not even permitted to properly pitch their idea to executives. Additionally, several companies declined to feature their products in the film due to its supposedly "offensive" content. Once their project was accepted by Orion, they were nearly unable to find high school campuses in New Orleans that were willing to lend their space; Seligman had to resort to shooting mostly in an abandoned elementary school and a college gymnasium. The initial drafts of the script included scenes of PJ and Josie being sent to a "militaristic boot camp" for "horny girls", where Punkie Johnson's character would've been introduced as head of the camp; however, these scenes were removed due to poor reception at test screenings.^{[8][9]}

Eunice Jera Lee served as costume designer on the film. She took inspiration from *Grease* (1978), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Heathers* (1988), *Jawbreaker* (1999), and *Bring It On* (2000).^[10]

On September 12, 2022, it was confirmed by *The New York Times* that filming had wrapped. Sennott described the film as, "Two girls in a classic American football town who start a fight club under the guise of female empowerment, but it's actually so they can have sex with cheerleaders".^[11]

Casting

In April 2022, it was announced that Ayo Edebiri, Marshawn Lynch, Ruby Cruz, Havana Rose Liu, Kaia Gerber, Nicholas Galitzine, Miles Fowler, Dagmara Domińczyk and Punkie Johnson were added to the cast.^{[12][13]} Filming was scheduled to take place in New Orleans between April 18 and May 27, 2022.^[14] Seligman has said that she cast Marshawn Lynch at the suggestion of Mayo, who pointed her to his appearance on the Netflix series *Murderville*, the majority of which he had improvised.^[15] Seligman also thought that having a "legendary football player" portraying an advisor to queer girls in the film is good representation for "that kind of straight, male character."^[16] She and Mayo were "not entirely expecting"

Lynch to accept the role when he was sent the script, with Lynch later saying that he did it as "an opportunity to correct [his] wrongs", explaining that his sister had come out as a lesbian to him when he was sixteen and that he had not initially handled this well; he also spoke with his sister about the role before taking it.^[16]

Music

The original film score for *Bottoms* was composed by Charli XCX and Leo Birenberg. In addition, the film features songs such as "Complicated" by Avril Lavigne, "Pain" by King Princess, "Total Eclipse of the Heart" by Bonnie Tyler, and "Party 4 U" by Charli XCX.^[17]

Release

Bottoms premiered at South by Southwest on March 11, 2023.^[18] The film was given a limited theatrical release in the United States by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer on August 25, 2023, before expanding to additional screens on September 1, 2023. It was also released theatrically in Canada on the same day.^[19] The film was released in the US and Canada on Amazon Prime Video on September 22.^[20]

Warner Bros. Pictures released the film in 405 theaters across in the United Kingdom and Ireland on November 3, 2023,^[21] and in Australia and New Zealand on November 30.^[22]

On March 31, 2024, Kino Lorber announced that they would be releasing the film on Blu-ray.^[23]

Reception

Box office

Bottoms opened in limited release at ten theaters in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Austin, grossing \$461,052 in its opening weekend, a per-venue average of \$46,105.^[24] It was the highest per-screen average on ten or more screens since *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (April 2022).^{[25][26]} The film expanded to 715 theaters in its second weekend, making \$3 million, and a total of \$3.58 million over the four-day Labor Day frame.^[27] Expanding to 1,265 theaters in its third weekend, the film made \$2 million, finishing in 10th.^[28]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 90% of 215 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.6/10. The website's consensus reads: "Propulsive and over-the-top, *Bottoms* is an instant high school comedy classic that feels both current and nostalgic."^[29] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 74 out of 100, based on 46 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[30] Audiences polled by PostTrak gave the film a 93% positive score, with women under 25 giving it 98% score and 96% saying they would definitely recommend it.^[31]

Reviewing the film for Variety, following its premiere at South by Southwest, Owen Gleiberman commended the direction and screenplay (particularly its characters and humor), stating: "*Bottoms* is unlike any high-school comedy you've ever seen. It's a satire of victimization, a satire of violence, and a satire of itself. It walks a tightrope between sensitivity and insanity (with a knowing bit of inanity), and it's full of

moments that are defiantly what we once used to call incorrect".^[32] Valerie Complex of *Deadline Hollywood* admired the lead performances and Seligman's direction, but found some faults with the screenplay, ultimately concluding: "*Bottoms* is fun, but with some slight tweaks this could have been an epic exploration of the gray areas of queerness and what it means to stand in the center of that as an adolescent".^[33] Referring to the film as the "horniest, bloodiest high school movie of the 21st century" in a highly enthusiastic review for *Rolling Stone*, David Fear lauded every aspect of the film, including its direction, screenplay and cast performances.^[34]

Accolades

Awards and nominations for *Bottoms*

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
South by Southwest	March 19, 2023	Audience Award – Headliners	<i>Bottoms</i>	Nominated	^[35] ^[36] ^[37]
Sidewalk Film Festival	August 27, 2023	Programmers' Award – Feature Film Award		Won	^[38]
St. Louis Film Critics Association	December 17, 2023	Best Comedy Film		Nominated	^[39]
Indiana Film Journalists Association	December 17, 2023	Best Original Screenplay	Emma Seligman, Rachel Sennott	Nominated	^[40] ^[41]
		Best Stunt/Movement Choreography	Deven MacNair	Nominated	
		Breakout of the Year	Marshawn Lynch	Nominated	
Astra Film and Creative Awards	January 6, 2024	Best Comedy Feature	<i>Bottoms</i>	Nominated	^[42]
Austin Film Critics Association	January 10, 2024	The Robert R. "Bobby" McCurdy Memorial Breakthrough Artist Award	Ayo Edebiri (also for <i>Theater Camp</i> and <i>TMNT: Mutant Mayhem</i>)	Nominated	^[43]
Denver Film Critics Society	January 12, 2024	Best Comedy	<i>Bottoms</i>	Nominated	^[44]
Critics' Choice Movie Awards	January 14, 2024	Best Comedy		Nominated	^[45]
Black Reel Awards	January 16, 2024	Outstanding Hairstyle and Make-Up	Shandrea Williams	Nominated	^[46]
Independent Spirit Awards	February 25, 2024	Best Screenplay	Emma Seligman, Rachel Sennott	Nominated	^[47]
		Best Breakthrough Performance	Marshawn Lynch	Nominated	
Artios Awards	March 7, 2024	Outstanding Achievement in Casting – Feature Studio or Independent (Comedy)	Laura Rosenthal, Maribeth Fox, Meagan Lewis, Kimberly Ostroy	Nominated	^[48]
GLAAD Media Awards	March 14, 2024	Outstanding Film – Wide Release	<i>Bottoms</i>	Won	^[49] ^[50]

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External links

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 - *Bottoms* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt17527468/>) at [IMDb](#)
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