

*THE ONLY
WAY OUT
IS THROUGH*



FILM INFORMATION

LOGLINE

Three friends head into the wilderness to reconnect. When one vanishes, the journey becomes a test of friendship, trust, and what it means to truly be there for one another.

CONTACT

Press / Bookings

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PRESS ASSETS

Download here: onlywayoutmovie.com/assets

SOCIAL

Website | onlywayoutmovie.com

Instagram | [@onlywayoutmovie](https://www.instagram.com/onlywayoutmovie)

Facebook | facebook.com/onlywayoutmovie

IMDB | imdb.com/title/tt18777276/

TECHNICAL

Run time – 89 minutes

Exhibition Format – DCP, 5.1 surround sound

Aspect Ratio – 1.85

Language – English

Unrated

FESTIVALS





OUR STORY

This film was inspired by our director Kieran Thompson's journey to reconnect with his childhood best friend after nearly losing him in a tragic accident. It's about friendship, masculinity, vulnerability, and the kind of inner struggles we rarely speak openly about, especially among men.

To bring it to life, our cast and crew camped in the Rocky Mountains of southern Colorado. One of our toughest days was a seven-mile trek on foot, climbing 2,746 feet with gear on our backs to film a pivotal scene at the top of Culebra Peak, 14,047 feet up.

All of that hard work feels worth it, because we believe we've created a meaningful film, and our festival run has shown it can start the type of conversations we aimed to start.



SYNOPSIS



Evan, Mark, and Nolan are childhood friends who've grown apart in their thirties. Evan plans a backpacking trip to rekindle their friendship, but things get tense when he confronts Nolan about a disconcerting car accident from a few years ago — Evan thinks it was a suicide attempt.

Feeling betrayed, Nolan disappears the next morning. As Evan and Mark search for him, they confront their own emotional shortcomings and the difficulties of keeping adult friendships alive.

With their newfound honesty and vulnerability, Evan and Mark are able to approach Nolan in a tender way that gives the three of them hope for a new chapter in their friendship.



CAST



ALEX MACNICOLL AS EVAN

Select credits include:

Transparent (Amazon), Brilliant Minds (NBC),
The Society (Netflix), Bad Monkey (Apple), Heart of Champions



BEAU KNAPP AS MARK

Select credits include:

The Bikeriders, SEAL Team (Paramount+), Tulsa King Season 3 (Paramount+),
Seven Seconds (Netflix), Road House, Southpaw, The Good Lord Bird (Showtime)



EMILIO GARCIA-SANCHEZ AS NOLAN

Select credits include:

The Society (Netflix), I Love LA (HBO), R#J, Love in the Time of
Corona, Instant Crush, Samson, Criminal Minds



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2014 I returned home from my honeymoon to find out my childhood best friend had been in a terrible car accident and was nearly killed. Coming that close to losing my oldest friend sent me on the most unexpected exploration of how friendship was lacking in my life, how deeply I needed it, and the way I could bring it back.

He and I had become fast friends in seventh grade, brought together by a shared love of blink-182 and soccer. We'd stay up late, talking on the phone about our latest crushes, challenges with school or our parents; we were comfortable being vulnerable and open about everything.

Now 16 years later, rumors were starting to swirl that my friend's accident might have been a suicide attempt. After years of alcohol abuse and erratic behavior, it made sense in the most awful way... and the idea of broaching the subject seemed impossible. Years had passed since our last late-night phone call; being open and vulnerable didn't come easy anymore. I loved my friend, wanted him to feel better, and felt like I owed it to him to be there for him, but it became this great burden. I was pretty much his only friend left at this point. I felt this responsibility, like I had to save him.

In the midst of realizing just how much I was struggling, I met our writer, Kyle Dickinson. I shared the potential solution I had been mulling over: I'd take my friend on a camping trip. Growing up in Scouts, I'd always found that men opened up in the woods. It was almost magic the way that guys would share some of their deepest feelings around a campfire. Kyle said, "that sounds like a terrible and possibly dangerous idea... but it's a great idea for a movie."

Despite barely knowing each other, Kyle was there to listen to my struggles. What began as a deeply personal story rang true for him as well. We dug into research on the topic and found this problem was impacting a shockingly high percentage of people who identify as men. We learned that equating masculinity with stoicism, silence, and strength leads to men who are more likely to experience depression, anger, and isolation.

It broke my heart that I wasn't alone. While broaching the topic of suicide feels like life or death, many men are just as scared to tell a friend they love them, or open up about their own problems for fear of seeming like a burden. Without vulnerability, friendships would simply fade. I had obsessed for years on how to be there for my friend, how to save him. What I learned most of all, was how badly I needed a friend.

I had countless excuses for why I didn't have the deep friendships I was craving: "He moved away," "we grew apart," "he's just a work friend." In my gut I felt it was because no one wanted to be my friend. But it was the opposite: I came to learn that I wasn't being a true friend to anyone. If I really wanted to be friends with my friend (and not just "save him" like I thought I was doing) I'd need to start by being open, honest and vulnerable with him about how scared I was of losing him and why I needed him in my life.

Even after all the work I'd done on myself, I was still scared to talk to my friend. Finally, one night after another friend's wedding, he and I went out for some late night pizza. It took all the courage I had in me to finally open the floodgates. We both cried into our pizza slices, and talked about things we had never shared before. It was a huge step forward in our relationship.

Making this film over the past ten years has taught me how to be a better friend in all of my friendships. My marriage is stronger. I'm a more understanding father. All my daily challenges have been easier to face because I no longer feel alone.

But so many men still do, that's why the world needs this story. There are toxic consequences of the fixation on the strong and silent ideal of masculinity. Depression, alcoholism, #MeToo, mass shootings, a suicide epidemic, the casualties extend across all ages, races, and genders. Men must take responsibility, and join the conversation about the solutions.

We're incredibly grateful to be able to contribute to that conversation, through the power of cinema.

– Kieran Thompson



HOW WE DID IT

To bring this story to life, our cast and crew camped, backpacked, and hiked deep into the Rocky Mountains of southern Colorado. One of our toughest days was a seven-mile trek on foot, climbing 2,746 feet with gear on our backs to film a pivotal scene at the top of Culebra Peak, 14,047 feet up.

We had an incredibly low budget, but we all believed in the impact this story could have, and that belief carried us through every step. That passion certainly comes through in the final film.

We partnered with the majestic Cielo Vista Ranch, a private 80,000 acre woodland playground in southern Colorado. The property includes Culebra Peak, the tallest privately owned peak in the world, standing at an awe-inspiring 14,047 feet.





FROM LETTERBOXD

"But when one of them suddenly vanishes, the film transforms from a quiet character drama into something more psychologically charged—a meditation on friendship, masculinity, grief, and the emotional distance men often mistake for strength."

– **Zachary**

"One of the most powerful and moving films I have ever seen period. It's a rare thing to be moved to tears and really feel something after or while watching film, it's almost unheard of to be inspired to take action and lead by the example that the film makes. This movie inspired me to be more open toward my guy friends and check in on them."

– **Movieswdan**

"One of the best real depictions of male friendships and mental health I've seen."

– **Parker Waken**

"Male relationships get harder to keep active as you age, and this story nailed that for me... Gorgeous cinematography, brilliant performances with meaningful nuances that kept them so real, and wonderful direction tying it all together."

– **Andy Nelson**

"The performances from the cast left nothing to be desired, as these guys will move you seamlessly from laughter to tears and back again."

– **koolaidragon**

"A very moving film that explores the complexity of friendship, vulnerability and mental health. Alex, Emilio and Beau are perfectly cast and bring a sense of familiarity to their characters that makes you forget you don't know them in real life. For consisting entirely of three men and a mountain, this film comes together with a richness and clarity well beyond its weight class."

– **claytonhagy**

"As a veteran who's spent a lot of time in VA therapy learning how to navigate civilian life, I was surprised (and honestly a little frustrated) that we don't see more films tackling male trauma and vulnerability like this. If we had more stories like this, maybe more men would feel comfortable speaking up and actually showing emotion."

– **Parcorich**

"this is what i thought the plot of friendship by tim robinson was gonna be"

– **Reid Jensen**

"It's nice to see platonic closeness represented in ways that aren't a joke or homophobia or falling into other insincere tropes. I saw it at the Fargo Film Festival, and it was my favorite film of the whole schedule."

– **Derek Dahlsad**

"This film tells us that it is OK for men to be human. Beautiful scenery and perfect acting."

– **grjohnson47**

"What an important movie. And incredibly relatable in the current social climate of male friendships and intimacy. I highly recommend it."

– **pat**

"Breaks down the emotional wall that men build up around themselves and lets them be vulnerable among friends. Def a must watch!"

– **Zachariah617**

"The world would be a better place if all straight men realized they can just talk to each other like this."

– **Kevin Bertolero**



FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR

Kieran Thompson is a filmmaker guided by his deep belief in both community and connection. Through those principles, he has rooted himself firmly in his hometown of Tempe, Arizona, helping to foster a thriving production hub full of friends and colleagues who look to him as a mentor and advocate. As a director, he is compelled by a strong authorial vision, but is first and foremost a generous collaborator. His tender, humanist approach invites the audience to lean in to the silver screen and see themselves inside his stories.



WRITER

Kyle Dickinson is a screenwriter and graduate of Chapman University's Screenwriting Program. After showcasing his award-winning student film "I Saved the World from Global Warming!" Kyle went on to work as an assistant for television legends, Peter Tolan and Greg Daniels, before becoming a writer on the half-hour comedy, "People of Earth" (TBS), and the experimental audio-drama "Calls" (Apple TV+). His goal is to tell stories that confront and challenge the complicated ways people have learned to treat themselves and others. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife Sam, his daughter Cora, and their nihilist pup, Werner Herzdog.



PRODUCER

Joshua Gonzales began his filmmaking career in his hometown of Phoenix, Arizona. Through organizing shoots for 48 hour contests and small projects, he found a true love for producing. He began working professionally in production in Arizona which led him to move to Los Angeles in 2015. Since then he has worked throughout the US on feature films such as "Knives Out", "Leave No Trace", "Sound Of Metal", "Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil, and Vile", and more. He has produced multiple short films such as "Momma" (Showtime), "Wish You Were There", "Represent", as well as many commercials and branded content. In 2020, he was invited to the AP Council of the Producers Guild of America. Adopting a “no crew member left behind” mentality, it is his ultimate goal to foster a cohesive creative work space for all involved.



CREDITS

CAST

ALEX MACNICOLL as Evan

BEAU KNAPP as Mark

EMILIO GARCIA-SANCHEZ as Nolan

directed by KIERAN THOMPSON

written by KYLE DICKINSON

story by

KIERAN THOMPSON & KYLE DICKINSON

produced by

JOSHUA GONZALES

producers

KIERAN THOMPSON

KYLE DICKINSON

executive producers

DANIEL WALKER

JANE SAGE & TOM OLBRICH

STETSON BINGHAM

DEBBIE & GARY DICKINSON

BETH & SALTY THOMPSON

TRAVIS & ALEX LADUE

ALEXIS ALLEN

director of photography JACEN SIEVERS

editor MISTY WILSON

line producer KAYLEE NEDLEY

associate producer CHRIS HECK

costume designer SKYLER GARDNER

sound designer RYAN COLLINS

casting by ALEXIS ALLEN, CSA

unit production manager SHELLY ORTIZ

1st assistant director STEPHEN RUSSELL

production assistant JAYDEN ROTHROCK

stunt coordinator TYLER ALBRECHT

casting associate VINCENT L. CARSON

1st assistant camera DRAKE DEWAR

2nd assistant camera ERIC DANESCU

key grip CHRIS CARSON

production sound mixer NILE POPCHOCK

supervising sound editor/re-recording mixer
RYAN COLLINS

sound editor/mix technician
JOSH AUDE

foley artists

ROWAN COLLINS

LEXI COLLINS

costumer ZAMARA FABELA MARINA

shopper CONNIE WIDDISON

costume assistant AMBER RAY

location managers

CARLOS DE LEON

JAVIER DE LEON

location assistant ADALINE DE LEON

location scout RYAN LAY

set medic ALONZO LOBATO JR.

trail guides

ALONZO LOBATO SR.

ALONZO LOBATO JR.

JUSTIN JOHNSON

trail runner WITT WISEBRAM

catering provided by THE 4 ATE 0

head chef JUSTIN OLSEN

chef's assistant REID OLSEN

color and finish by COMPANY 3

finishing colorist KATH RAISCH

production legal services provided by RAMO LAW

CHAD RUSSO

CONTACT

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A cinematic photograph showing three people from behind, sitting on a large, dark log in a sun-dappled forest. The person on the left wears a red long-sleeved shirt and patterned pants. The person in the middle wears a blue and white plaid shirt. The person on the right wears a light-colored hoodie and a dark beanie. They are all looking out over a dense green forest towards a range of mountains in the distance under a clear sky. The text 'THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH' is overlaid in a white, serif font across the lower center of the image.

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