



POTATO

of DREAMS *America*

a film by Wes Hurley

BASED ON TRUE STORY

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Premiering in Narrative Competition at SXSW

Wes Hurley mixes farce, fantasy and autobiography in his outrageously fun and deeply affecting Potato Dreams of America.

Jonathan Duffy, producer of "Sorry to Bother You"

Potato Dreams of America is a bold and beguiling film with a big, gorgeous heart.

Craig Johnson, director/writer "The Skeleton Twins"

Potato Dreams of America somehow manages to be hilarious and heartbreaking all at once, with unique visual style and bold storytelling choices that are a delight to behold.

Guinevere Turner, screenwriter "American Psycho", "Charlie Says"





Wes Hurley's autobiographical dark comedy about a young boy growing up in the collapsing USSR, his courageous mail-order bride mother and their adventurous escape to Seattle in the 90s. Full of unexpected twists, the film is an immigrant's take on the American Dream and the power of cinema, proving that life is often stranger than fiction.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first shared some of my story publicly in the Huffington Post essay titled "Growing Up Gay in Russia". The article went viral and was translated into other languages including, ironically, Russian. What I realized after receiving an outpouring of personal responses from people all over the world is that life in Russia, especially for gay people, is still very much a mystery to the rest of the world. Now, more than ever the story is incredibly relevant with its themes of Russian and US politics, immigrants' quest for the American Dream, government corruption, social oppression, violence against women, and LGBT rights. But despite the heavy subject matter, the story of my mom and I coming to America is not only very funny but also very inspiring, with an ending that will have to be seen to be believed. I believe this story of unconditional love, human resilience and the power of hope is what the world needs right now.



WRITER / DIRECTOR

Wes Hurley is a Russian-born and raised, Seattle-based filmmaker. He has made two feature films, dozens of shorts and 2 seasons of a critically acclaimed comedy series *CAPITOL HILL* (starring Jinkx Monsoon, BenDeLaCreme, Waxie Moon and Robbie Turner). Hurley is a recipient of Creative Capitol Award, Seattle Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture Award, Advocate Magazine's Person to Watch and City Arts Magazine's Artist of the Year. His autobiographical short doc *LITTLE POTATO* (co-directed with Nathan Miller) won dozens of awards including the Oscar-qualifying Jury Prize at SXSW. It was also nominated for Year's Best Short by The Wrap, Vimeo and CinemaEye. Hurley's story and his work has been featured on BBC, NPR, The Atlantic, Vice, Out, The Wrap, Huffington Post, The Advocate and Topic among others.

THE CAST



Lea DeLaria seems to have achieved overnight stardom with her three-time, SAG Award winning, stand-out role as ‘Carrie ‘Big Boo’ Black’ in the Netflix hit series “Orange is the New Black.” However, DeLaria’s multi- faceted career as a comedian, actress and jazz musician, has in fact, spanned decades. Lea holds the distinction of being the first openly gay comic on television in America (on The Arsenio Hall Show). Selected TV credits: The Code, Shameless, Broad City, Baroness Von Sketch, The Jim Gaffigan Show, Awkward, Clarence, Californication, The Oblongs, One Live to Live, Law and Order: SVU, Will and Grace, Friends & Matlock. Selected Film credits: Cars 3, Support The Girls, First Wives Club, Dear Dumb Diary, Edge of Seventeen. She’s received Obie & Theater World Awards, and a Drama Desk nomination for her portrayal as ‘Hildy’ in the Public Theatre’s revival of On The Town, and has played both Eddie & Dr. Scott in the gender-bending Broadway musical The Rocky Horror Show.

THE CAST



Beloved veteran of Broadway, TV and film, **Dan Lauria** is best known for his iconic role as Jack Arnold, the dad on *The Wonder Years*. Lauria's career spans hundreds of roles including many in some of TV's most popular shows like *This is Us*, *Party of Five*, *Blue Bloods*, *Cagney & Lacey*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Smallville*, *Sullivan and Son*, *Hot in Cleveland* and *How I Met Your Mother*. A devoted lover of theater, Lauria's Broadway credits include his critically-acclaimed performances in *Lombardi* and *A Christmas Story: The Musical*.

THE CAST



Jonathan Bennett is known for his roles as Aaron Samuels in the 2004 comedy film *Mean Girls*, *Cheaper by the Dozen 2*, *The Christmas House*, the title character in the 2009 direct-to-DVD comedy *Van Wilder: Freshman Year*, and his recurring roles as Casey Gant in the UPN mystery drama *Veronica Mars* and JR Chandler in the ABC soap opera *All My Children*. He is the host of the Food Network series *Halloween Wars*, and he previously hosted *Cake Wars*.

THE CAST



Rizo aka Amelia Zirin-Brown is a NYC based **Grammy-winning** singer, performance artist, comedienne, composer, and actor. She won the inaugural Time Out London and Soho Theatre Award, and the 2013 London Cabaret Award. A recipient of the NY Foundation for the Arts fellowship, her original pieces have shown at the Public Theatre in New York (resident artist for 3 years Joe's Pub) London's Leister Square Theatre, and the Sydney Festival. Rizo created the 6-piece house band and was the mistress of ceremonies for the popular NYC supper-club The Darby, performing alongside musical luminaries such as John Mayer, Leann Rimes and Bruno Mars. Along with Yo-Yo Ma, she has recorded with Moby and Reggie Watts.



Sophia Mitri Schloss is currently filming as a series regular for the original Disney+ series Big Shot, alongside John Stamos. She starred in the title role of Sadie in Megan Griffith's 2018 feature film, Sadie alongside Melanie Lynskey, John Gallaher, Jr. and Danielle Brooks. Preceding this, Sophia starred in the title role of Lane in Lane 1974, the story of a teenage girl's coming of age during the 1970's American counterculture. Previous roles include a leading role in Amazon's The Kicks, and the starring role of Isabel in NBC's comedy pilot Isabel alongside Marcia Gay Harden and Kevin Nealon. In addition, she guest-starred on NBC's Grimm, TNT's The Librarians, and IFC's Portlandia.

THE CAST



Sera Barbieri is a recent graduate of NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, studying the internet's impact on human interaction, while minoring in studio art and theater. As an intern at some of the nation's largest media companies, she discovered her true love for acting and writing. Now pursuing screenwriting and acting full time, she has appeared in short films, as well as small roles in feature film and television.

THE CAST



Marya Sea Kaminski is a writer, director and performer based in Pittsburgh, where she serves as the Artistic Director of the Pittsburgh Public Theater. As a theatre performer, her favorite roles include: The Angel in *ANGELS IN AMERICA PARTS I & II* at Intiman Theatre, the title role in the West Coast premiere of *MY NAME IS RACHEL CORRIE*, Hedda in *HEDDA GABLER* (several times), and the lead singer of a badass rock band in her original musical *RIDDLED* that played to sold-out houses in Seattle. She's received commissions to create original solo work from the Frye Museum and Richard Hugo House in Seattle, and has also appeared on subway platforms across lower Manhattan.

THE CAST

Introducing



Tyler Boccock got his start through Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre in their production of Oliver! He spent the proceeding years performing in Village KidStage and Tahoma High School's productions including 5th Avenue Best High School Musical Ghost, The Musical as Carl Bruner and Tarzan as Turk. He has appeared in several short films. Potato Dreams of America is his first feature.

Hersh Powers is delighted to be in his first feature film. Hersh is an eighth grader at Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Potato Dreams of America

Directed By

Wes Hurley

Written By

Wes Hurley (based on true story)

Produced by

Mischa Jakupcak

Wes Hurley

Executive Producers

Eliza Flug

Sarah Crowe

Mel Eslyn

Director of Photography

Vincent Pierce

Production Design

Kristen Bonnalie

Costume Design

Harmony Arnold

Original Music Score By

Catherine Joy (America)

Joshua Kohl (USSR)

Lighting Design/Gaffer

Robert Aguilar

Editor

Wes Hurley

Assistant Camera

Vladimir Krimenovic

Casting By

Patricia McCorkle

Key Makeup Artist

Lorena Soto

Key Hair Artist

Charles Sterling Perritt III

Original Wigs Created By

Dennis Milam Bensie

Associate Producer

Daryle Conners

Co-Producers

Vicky Berglund-Davenport

Sue Corcoran

Sound Mixer

Dave Howe, C.A.S.

Assistant Director

Sarah Crowe

Consulting Editor

Annette Davey

Consulting Producer

Jonathan Duffy

Art Director

Oscar Lofgren

Supervising Art Director

Montana Tippett

Dance Choreography

Barthelemy M. Bajazet

Valentyna Sidenko

Marc Kenison

Fight Choreography and Stunt Coordinator

Peter "Drago" Tiemann

Additional Music By

Rizo

Aaron Taylor and Mama's Iguana

Gretta Harley

Dmitry Kasantsev

Daniel Vergara

The Little Penguins

Orchestral Score Performed By

Fames Project – Orchestral Music Recording

CAST

Marya Sea Kaminski	Lena in America
Tyler Bocoock	Potato in America
Dan Lauria	John
Sera Barbieri	Lena in Russia
Hersh Powers	Potato in Russia
Lea DeLaria	Grandma Tamara
Jonathan Bennett	Jesus Christ
Sophia Mitri Schloss	Mandy
Cynthia Lauren Tewes	Nina Ivanovna
Jule Johnson	Vova
Sarah Rudinoff	Russian Teacher
Alycia Delmore	American Teacher
Max Christofferson	Tigran
Sara Porkalob	Cheryl
Consuelo Aduviso	Nina
Nicole Santora	Carrie
Stephen Hando	Prison Warden
Annette Toutonghi	Marina
Mandy Price	Polina
Opal Peachey	Svetlana
Forrest Campbell	Fedia
Eban Tracy	Dima
Elliot Gantner	Stepa
Lady B	Bernice
Ro Yoon	Rose
Davora Lindner	Barbara
Amy Love	Sunday School Teacher
Jordan Iosua Taylor	Video Store Crush
Justin Huertas	Bryan
Luminous Pariah	Michael
James Grixoni	Young John