

With a star-studded cast including Christian Slater, Alicia Silverstone, Molly Ringwald, and James Franco, KING COBRA has the potential to be an engaging ripped-from-the-headlines drama about fresh-eyed gay porn star-in-the-making Sean Paul Lockhart a.k.a. Brent Corrigan ([Garrett Clayton](#)), and his relationship with his producer Stephen (the King Cobra, played by [Christian Slater](#)). Suggestive, but not as explicit as a film like BOOGIE NIGHTS, KING COBRA explores a corner of the porn industry not often traversed by such a mainstream cast.

While exploring superficial relationships in front of the camera, there is also a deeper relationship being explored by male escorts-turned-porn-producers Joe ([James Franco](#)), and Harlow ([Keegan Allen](#)). Joe and Harlow's relationship explores the idea of manhood in the gay community, and the jealousy that comes with seeing a loved one eyeballed, and shared with other partners. Though Joe is the one aggressively pushing Harlow in front of the camera, and even acting as the pimp in their escort service, he is still pushed to anger easily anytime someone shows even the slightest bit of attention to Harlow. Though there are tender moments with them throughout the movie, Harlow is really treated as nothing more than a possession of Joe's, and Joe doesn't like to share his toys with anyone, sometimes with violent repercussions.

Stephen crosses a line with Brent by getting emotionally invested in his male ingenue.

Feeding off of Stephen's burgeoning feelings for him, Brent revels in making Stephen jealous. This leads to Brent taking advantage of Stephen's money, hospitality, his feelings of loneliness, and isolation, as he lives the porn producer part of his life in secret from his neighbors, friends, and family. As Brent's star power rises, so does his greed. The tension between the two comes to a head when Brent uncovers the true amount of money that Stephen has been making from selling his videos, causing him to take his career in his own hands.

From there the flick enters the crime/drama genre that it's classified as. When Brent goes public with information that he forged his identification and acted underage in Stephen's movies after being frustrated that he can't get work under his pseudonym Brent Corrigan (because legally Stephen owns his stage name and effectively blackballed him in the gay porn industry), he becomes ostracized from the porn community, his family, and ruins Stephen's life as well. It's at this low point that he gets involved with the unstable and desperate Joe and Harlow. When Joe tries to negotiate to use Sean's stage name in their films, Stephen refuses, forcing Harlow to use his military training to take Stephen out of the picture. What follows is their inevitable capture and Brent's personal redemption as a porn

director/producer/star working for himself. The ending of KING COBRA comes at you pretty quick, but everything gets resolved and it doesn't feel like the director just needed to end the movie.

KING COBRA explores several reasons why people get into the porn industry. Money, insecurity, a lack of a place in a community, and past childhood traumas. While some of these reasons feel a bit put on in the script, it doesn't diminish the authenticity of the characters. At least the writer/director [Justin Kelly](#) took a moment to flesh out his character's backstories to give them motivation, and not just let his characters appear flat on the screen. The director really humanizes his characters, making a horrific act's motivations feel real and not just scripted content, or a headline out of a news story re-enacted for the audience. The movie is also shot well, and not gratuitous at all in the numerous sex scenes throughout the hour and a half runtime, and the pacing gets you from opening credits to closing quickly. The incidental and overall music and sound design is great, really capturing both the time period and mood of the film. None of the supporting case phones it in, with great performances overall including Alicia Silverstone as Brent/Sean's mother, and [Spencer Lofranco](#) as Mikey, a fellow porn actor and fling of Brents.

(449)

KING COBRA Review

9.2

FILM SYNOPSIS - This ripped-from-the-headlines drama covers the early rise of gay porn headliner Sean Paul Lockhart a.k.a. Brent Corrigan, before his falling out with the producer who made him famous. When Sean decides he'd be better off a free agent, a cash-strapped pair of rival producers aim to cash in by any means possible.

Story8.0

Director9.0

Cinematography9.0

Acting10.0

Sound10.0

Reader Rating: (1 vote) 8.4