

**Cinemien**  
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# Edge of Seventeen



## Een film van David Moreton

**Winner: Best Feature - Alfred Bauer Award  
- Berlin International Film Festival 2000**

**Winner: Audience Award & Grand Jury Award 1998  
- L.A. Outfest**

**Winner: Audience Award  
- San Francisco International L&G Film Festival 1998**

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## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - synopsis

Van Boy George tot de Eurythmics en van fluorescerend overhemden tot snoeiharde haargel: de zomer van 1984 was zo jaren tachtig als de jaren tachtig ooit zouden worden. De 17-jarige Eric Hunter uit het provinciale Sandusky, Ohio, zit er middenin gevangen.

Samen met zijn vriendinnetje Maggie heeft hij zijn bruine polyester schooluniform tijdelijk verruild voor een zomerbaantje in het fast food restaurant bij een plaatselijk pretpark. Collega Rod kan er zijn baby blauwe ogen niet van Eric afhouden, en Eric zelf vindt het steeds moeilijker Rod's flirts te weerstaan.

Rod's aantrekkingskracht heeft een verwarrende, beangstigende maar ook opwindende uitwerking op Eric en beetje bij beetje begint die zich in zijn aankleding en gebruik van grote hoeveelheden haargel uit te dossen als de nieuwe persoon die hij wordt; namelijk, zichzelf. Het echte leven kan beginnen...



### EDGE OF SEVENTEEN

100 min / Kleur / 35 mm / Dolby SR / Engels gesproken / VS 1998

Nederlandse theatrale distributie: Cinemien [www.cinemien.nl](http://www.cinemien.nl)

Belgische theatrale distributie: ABC Distribution [www.abc-distribution.be](http://www.abc-distribution.be)

DVD uitbreng : Homescreen [www.homescreen.nl](http://www.homescreen.nl) [www.homescreen.be](http://www.homescreen.be)

Kijkwijzer: 12 jaar



## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - crew

Regie : David Moreton  
Scenario : Todd Stephens  
Camera : Gina Degirolamo & Zak Othmer  
Montage : Tal Ben-David  
Muziek : Tom Baily  
Producent : David Moreton & Todd Stephens



## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - cast

Eric : Chris Stafford  
Maggie : Tina Holmes  
Rod : Anderson Gabrych  
Moeder : Stephanie McVay  
Angie : Lea DeLaria  
Vader : John Eby  
Andy : Antonio Carriero

## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - over regisseur David Moreton

David Moreton (Salt Lake City) maakte zijn entree in de filmwereld vanuit een onverwachte hoek: Wall Street. Na het behalen van zijn MBA aan de University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, werkte David namelijk enige jaren voor financiële bedrijven als SEI Corporation en Kidder Peabody & Co.

In 1996 startte David Moreton zijn filmbedrijf Blue Streak Films. Hij schreef, produceerde en regisseerde een korte film, **Baby Blue**, en produceerde en regisseerde de documentaire **Straight Up and Down**. David Moreton woont in New York.



### Filmografie:

- **Baby Blue** (korte film)
- **Straight up and down** (documentaire)
- **Edge of Seventeen** (1998)
- **Testosterone** (2003)

## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - Production Notes

Writer/producer Todd Stephens: "I cracked open an old trunk of keepsakes I hadn't touched in years. Being a chronic pack rat, I found a detailed time capsule from my high school years -- letters I'd saved, photographs, even clothing (-some of which Eric ended up wearing in the film). Wrapped in a plastic bag was a bottle of Polo cologne I swiped from the guy who first "initiated" me. One whiff was all it took-- I was back in 1984."

When the script was completed, Stephens, who at that time was planning to direct himself, set out to find a producer. He met David Moreton in June of 1997 and gave him the script. Says Moreton, "I actually didn't want to read it. All I knew about the script was that it was a 'coming out' story. Haven't we heard this a thousand times? But as I read through the script I realized this wasn't just about a kid coming out. This wasn't just another story of a boy losing his virginity. Here's a seventeen-year-old hero who fights to be truthful. Edge shows us what we lost along the way to being honest with the world. Too many of these stories end with the notion that by coming out everything will be rosy. But in this movie, Eric must lose something in the process of coming out to his family and friends. Yes, it's better to be honest, but it comes at a price. It's a more sophisticated look at the subject."

For Stephens, returning to Ohio, with the prospect of seeing his life unfold in front of him at the actual 'scene of the crime,' he decided the film might be better served with more objective eyes. He asked David to step in as director. Explains Stephens, "During the writing process, my friends asked if it was difficult to turn my life into a screenplay. At the time it wasn't. But back home in the reality of Ohio, I felt I was too close to the material -- and that Dave would have a more objective eye."

Says Moreton, "Stepping in as director not long before shooting began was both thrilling and frightening. But luckily I was supported by a talented crew that was deeply committed to getting this film made. I know it's a cliché to say that filmmaking is a collaborative art, but Edge of Seventeen is proof that when filmmakers believe in something, collaboration is a powerful creative choice."

Looking at the project now, Moreton says, "I have been involved in the movie for over a year and I hear the same reaction again and again. Over and over people (gay and straight) tell me that they identify with the feelings of isolation, rejection, and fear that Eric confronts. Eric must search to find his place in the world, and that struggle is common among all of us. Most members of the crew wanted to be part of this project because they identified with Eric. They were willing to work for little money in the middle of nowhere so they could make sure this story was told. They may have found Eric sympathetic because he speaks to our desire to find out where we fit in."

## David Moreton, From Producer to Director in 10 Minutes Flat

- by Aaron Krach

### What was your first reaction when Stephens asked you to step in as director?

My first reaction was excitement. I had wanted to direct a feature anyway. We were way into production. We had started filming and Todd decided that he couldn't do it. Todd came to me and asked if I would take over. I jumped at the chance and said yes and so one morning I found myself with 50 extras, a cast and crew staring at me saying, "What do we do." I had only been the director for all of 10 minutes. It was kind of an intense experience. I didn't have time to have a nervous breakdown. Truly, I benefited from the fact that I didn't have time to get nervous.

### Do you think you benefited from having been the producer and thus having been very involved already.

Yes. In auditions I read with the actors. I was intricately involved with everything. We went on scouting trips and I found locations. I knew the cast and crew and they were friends. As corny as it sounds, this movie was a fascinating collaborative process.

### How was it to collaborate with someone who not only wrote a script, but a very autobiographical one as well?

It's important that the script was autobiographical for Todd. So despite the fact that Todd wasn't there, we tried very hard to remain true to his story. That was very helpful when you don't know what to do or feel lost a bit. It was good to ground ourselves in that.

### One of the key elements in accurately capturing the feel of 1984 is the tremendous amount of 80s music in the film, Annie Lennox, Tony Basil, etc. How did you manage to get the rights to so much music?

When we were showing the script around initially, people would say "Oh this is great, but you'll never get this music." So we got freaked out and we decided we'd better try. It was important for me to have a great soundtrack. Music of that era was very important for me. I think that music for teenagers is an escape from their problems. The key is getting a good supervisor who has the connections. We had Gerry Gershman, who was really great. He knew Annie Lennox's manager. He knew Tom Bailey's record company's executive. (Bailey, previously of the Thompson Twins, composed the score.) Before we even started filming, he started working on it. It helped that we started early and it helped that he was persistent. It also helped that people liked the movie. We also ended up spending money on it. Not a lot. It's funny cause I thought it was so much, but now I've talked other people who spent two or three times what we did for only a few songs. But that is because we started early. We also never backed ourselves into a corner for a song, unless we knew we had the rights before we shot the scene.

### "Edge of Seventeen" premiered on the gay film fest circuit before heading to mainstream fests like Sundance. What do you think of the ever-expanding circuit of gay and lesbian festivals?

I think it's great. Although, I encourage people to open in straight fest because it gets more exposure. Actually, I go back and forth. For example, at Outfest in LA; if your movie is well received, you meet so many people in Hollywood. Because all the people who run the festival work

for studios, you meet all these people. So by all means, do those festivals and your film does get exposure. I also think they are great at bringing gay films that would never get distributed to an audience that would appreciate them. And I'm not sure they should be distributed, cause it would be even harder for other movies to get an audience.

**You had a particularly good experience in San Francisco with your parents in the audience.**

My parents went to see the film at the Castro Theater during the San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. It was sold out, 1,200 screaming people. I am so happy they saw it there, cause you can't ask for a better audience. That was an unbelievable experience and I don't think I will ever have it again, unless I make another gay film. It was just so cool. The audience interacted with the movie. They booed and cheered. Two distributors came up to me afterwards and wanted the movie because of the reaction. One of them was Strand, which we eventually went with.

**Your path to filmmaking is definitely out of the ordinary. How did you get from Wall Street to Edge of Seventeen?**

I was an English major as an undergrad and then I worked for awhile. Then I got an MBA at Wharton and worked on Wall Street. I went through three jobs very quickly after graduate school. It was very apparent to me that it wasn't the right career. The only thing I ever wanted to do was film. But when I was young I thought, "Oh that's not what real people do for a living." So I didn't pursue it until I was nearing 30 and I realized I couldn't go through the rest of my life sitting behind a desk.

## EDGE OF SEVENTEEN - Internationale pers

"The insecurities and turbulent desires of adolescence have rarely been portrayed more faithfully on screen than in EDGE OF 17..."

- Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

"The acting is wonderful throughout, and Chris Stafford is nearly flawless. Watching him shift by subtle degrees - not just in the character's overall evolution, but in the way he has to constantly readjust his bearings while leading a double life - is to witness one of the better performances you'll see this year.

- Ernest Hardy, *LA Weekly*

"Director David Moreton does a fine job re-creating the story's mid-'80s milieu, and the well-chosen musical score includes such characteristic bands of the period as Haircut 100 and Bronski Beat. The young, attractive cast members deliver sensitive portrayals that go a long way toward providing the film with a sense of realism, while Lea Delaria - the butch, lesbian boss with a heart of gold - infuses the proceedings with some needed comic relief."

- Frank Scheck, *The Hollywood Reporter*

With both compassion and detachment, writer Todd Stephens, drawing upon his own experience, and director David Moreton, backed by a dedicated cast and crew, have created a beautiful and touching film, made with love, wisdom and good humor.

- Kevin Thomas, *Los Angeles Times*

"Reminiscent of both the American "Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love" and Brit "Beautiful Thing" in its appealing young players and humorous yet delicately felt adolescent coming-out portrait, pic should score similarly well. Unpretentious, funny and touching, EDGE OF 17 rates as a quintessential Amerindie sleeper."

- Dennis Harvey, *Variety*