



SXSW COVERAGE

SXSW 2014: 'The Wilderness of James' Interview

By *Jordan Gass-Poore*



Native Portlander **Michael Johnson** makes his feature debut with ***The Wilderness of James***, which made its world premiere during this year's SXSW. The drama, based on a short story by Johnson, follows teenager James (Australian newcomer and fellow hyphenated last namer **Kodi Smit-McPhee**) a few months after his father's death. He struggles to find a way to cope with his feelings and, after visiting a therapist (Danny DeVito), takes to the streets and woods of Portland, where the movie was shot in 2012. During one of these outings James befriends the older teen Harmon (**Evan Ross** who starred in one of my favorite movies *Gardens of the Night* and will star in the upcoming *Hunger Games* movies) on a bus, who introduces him to the city's teenage nightlife. His outlook on life changes through his friendship with Harmon and Val (**Isabelle Fuhrman**), the teenage he reconnects with from a clinic.

I spoke with Johnson, writer/director of *The Wilderness of James*, Fuhrman (of *Hunger Games* fame, whose stylishly-dressed mother was also in attendance snapping photos) and executive producer **Glenn Howerton**, maybe better known as Dennis from the FX TV series *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* during a small press roundtable about the movie.



MARCH 24, 2014

JORDAN GASS-POORE'

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