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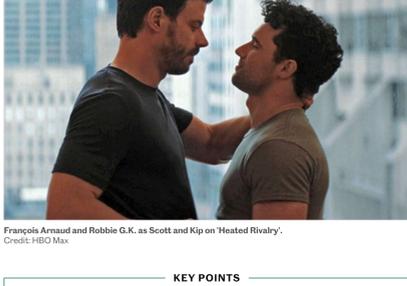
SPOILER ALERT

Heated Rivalry star shot about 'two days of sex scenes' that aren't in episode 3: 'Maybe they're saving it'

François Arnaud digs into Scott and Kip's love story.

By Nick Romano December 5, 2025 8:00 a.m. ET

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François Arnaud and Robbie G.K. as Scott and Kip on 'Heated Rivalry'. Credit: HBO Max

KEY POINTS

- Heated Rivalry star François Arnaud shares there's a lot more that he filmed with Robbie G.K. beyond episode 3.
• The actor from Schitt's Creek and The Borgias remembers initially thinking the show was 'soft porn,' but quickly realized it 'turns it on its head.'
• Arnaud recalls meeting his costar behind Kip for the first time and filming their sex scenes, calling the process 'respectful but not precious.'

Warning: This article contains spoilers from Heated Rivalry episode 3.

Heated Rivalry, the Canadian romance that seems to have everyone in a chokehold, is back this week with a third episode — though we're taking a brief break from the steamy sexcapades of Major League Hockey superstars Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams) and Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrle).

Actors François Arnaud and Robbie G.K. now take centerstage as hockey star Scott Hunter and barista Kip Grady, respectively, the two lead characters of author Rachel Reid's first book in her Game Changers series. "It's not as smutty as the first two," Arnaud acknowledges in an interview with Entertainment Weekly. "I hope people are along for the ride. It's a gear shift for the show. It's a bit of a bubble [episode], but then I think it certainly has an influence on how the other episodes play out."



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That's not to say it doesn't give the people what they want. The episode tracks the gents' meet-cute when Scott stumbles into the juice shop where Kip works and the two soon spiral into a steamy relationship, one that Scott, fearful of being outed, keeps relegated to the privacy of his apartment.



Kip (Robbie G.K.) and Scott (François Arnaud) on 'Heated Rivalry'. Credit: HBO Max



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"There isn't that much sex in our episode," Arnaud, also known for Schitt's Creek and The Borgias, points out, fully aware of why so many people around the globe are watching the series. "We shot a lot more than there is. I don't know, maybe they're saving it for later, but we shot a lot, like two days of sex scenes. We knew we wanted it to be sweet, sometimes clumsy, joyful, and easy, and not for an audience. Just for them to have that moment."

Arnaud and Heated Rivalry showrunner Jacob Tierney have known each other for nearly two decades, notably teaming on 2019 sitcom The Moodys. The actor first got a call from Tierney himself, asking if he received the scripts for the six episodes from his agents yet. "He said, 'I didn't write this for you, but I cannot hear anyone else's voice in my head when I read it,'" Arnaud recalls.

Tierney pitched Scott and Kip as "the emotional pendant of Shane and Ilya," meaning "all the things they cannot access," Arnaud recalls. Though, once he started reading, he had a different reaction.

"At first I was like, 'Is Jacob Tierney, who I've known for 17 years as an intellectual, doing soft porn?' I was like, 'What is this?'" he continues. "And then he really turns it on its head. Hot sex is great, but he uses hot sex as a way into so much more than that."

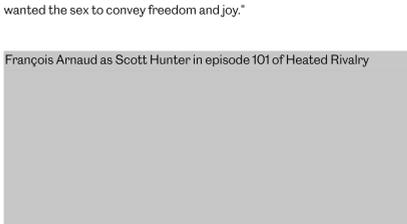


François Arnaud and Robbie G.K. on 'Heated Rivalry' episode 3. Credit: HBO Max

Unlike the heat of Shane and Ilya's time under the covers, which Arnaud describes as "repressed locker room sex," Scott and Kip's intimacy feels gentle yet passionate. Arnaud admits he's performed many a sex scene in his career, pointing also to this year's SXSW Film Festival title F---toys, which presents a toxic sexual dynamic with a woman. With Heated Rivalry, "It was really nice to use sex scenes to tell a different story," he notes.

Arnaud first met G.K. during a brief chemistry test that played out over Zoom. About 30 minutes later, his new costar was confirmed for the role of Kip. They didn't spend much time together afterward. Arnaud praises intimacy coordinator Chala Hunter, describing the physically vulnerable scenes as "respectful but not precious."

"Sometimes it feels like things are too important, in a way, and you're just scared to do anything and it's paralyzing. This was liberating," Arnaud says. "We knew, especially in our episode or in our relationship, that we wanted the sex to convey freedom and joy."



François Arnaud as Scott Hunter on 'Heated Rivalry' episode 1. Credit: Sabrina Lantoso

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Episode 3 might have ended on a teary-eyed note — Scott stands on the street outside the bar where Kip's friends are celebrating his birthday, unable to come out of the closet and publicly proclaim his love for this sweet barista — but there are three more installments to come in season 1.

While Arnaud teases "there's more to come" when it comes to the Scott and Kip story, he's still trying to go with the flow when it comes to Heated Rivalry's overnight success. He always believed in the show and expected it to find an audience, he says, but he calls the overnight popularity "crazy."

"I'm struggling to sleep, actually," he shares. "It's a lot. I have to delete my Instagram. It's just too much for me." Though Heated Rivalry turned Williams and Storrle into instant hits, Arnaud doesn't know how fans will embrace (or not) his episode with G.K. "Some people might find it less hot than repressed locker room sex," he comments. "That's their problem."

New episodes of Heated Rivalry arrive every Friday on HBO Max in the U.S.

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