



Heated Rivalry creator addresses Jordan Firstman dissing show's sex scenes: 'He's been sending my cast apology messages'

Firstman made headlines for saying that the Crave series offered few moments "that actually show gay sex."

By **Mekishana Pierre** | December 22, 2025 3:15 p.m. ET

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Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie on 'Heated Rivalry'; Jordan Firstman on 'I Love LA'.
Credit: Sabrina Lantos/HBO; Kenny Laubbacher/HBO

Things are getting heated in the hockey romance discourse.

[Heated Rivalry](#) creator Jacob Tierney has officially addressed the criticism his Crave series has received regarding the show's sultry sex scenes. While the steamy Canadian romantic drama set in the world of professional hockey has been making headlines for everything from its fans' near-instant obsession since the show premiered to the stars' audacious press run, it's the conversation around its authenticity that's been creating the most buzz.

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"We as queer people need to check our messaging," Tierney said of the criticisms aimed at his series and the original story written by Canadian author Rachel Reid in a recent interview with [The Hollywood Reporter](#). "The things that we decide women can or can't do can be really exhausting. Women are allowed to write about men. They're allowed to write about gay men."



Jacob Tierney attends the premiere of 'Heated Rivalry' at TIFF in 2025.
Credit: Harold Feng/Getty

He continued, "The question should be, how are they writing about us? Is it with empathy? Is it with allyship? Is it with kindness? Why are we looking for enemies here instead of looking for allies?"

Tierney's comments come after actor and comedian Jordan Firstman, who stars on Rachel Sennott's new series, *I Love LA*, [called out the hockey romance's depiction of intimacy](#) in an interview with [Vulture](#) on earlier this month, saying that the sex in the show "is not how gay people f---" and that the series caters to people who "want to see two straight hockey players pretending to be gay."

He went on to say that lead actors Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie [should out themselves if they are gay](#).

"I don't respect you because you care too much about your career and what's going to happen if people think you're gay," Firstman told the outlet.

Firstman later walked back his comments, and Tierney told *THR* that the actor was "sending my cast apology messages, and other castmembers of [*I Love LA*] have reached out to us and apologized on his behalf."



Jordan Firstman and Augusto Aguilera on 'I Love LA'.

Credit: Kenny Laubbacher/HBO

But Firstman's comments weren't the only ones to stir the pot; a review from [The Guardian](#) accuses the show of being "content to exploit gay culture without understanding it in a meaningful way."

"There is a weird kind of fetish in these works that de-sexes gay men just enough to make them palatable, like pets for young women," the review added, likening the show to when bachelorette parties invade gay bars – a trend that many in the LGBTQ community are not fans of.

A review published on [Slate](#) claimed that for all the thirst over the show's sex scenes, the series approaches sexuality in a "deeply conservative way."

"According to the logic of its plot thus far, sex between men does not make the characters gay (or even bisexual, for that matter)," the review reads. "By their own admission, they do not see themselves that way. Gayness begins only when desire leaves the bedroom and enters the social world—when it is confessed, claimed, and explained."



Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov and Hudson Williams as Shane Hollander on 'Heated Rivalry'.
Credit: Sabrina Lantos

While Tierney adapting Reid's stories for the screen does allow for a more nuanced perspective for the series, it doesn't resolve what Slate sees as the show's biggest issue: "The show remains tethered to a premise and narrative logic shaped by a genre that, in its most popular and influential iterations, has often been driven by writers working outside gay male social worlds – in this case a woman."

The review noted, "Whatever turns the source material or later episodes may take, the show's first four episodes have already committed to a set **Read more** as **GENRE** s **LGBTQ** intimacy, isolation, and heterosexual fallback that deserve scrutiny on their own terms."

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Reid herself has also responded to the criticisms regarding the question of who gets to tell stories about queer people.

"I feel personally, that as long as you're willing to be sensitive and thoughtful about what you're writing, and most importantly, are willing to listen to feedback from the community that you're trying to represent, then you can write what you want to write," the author told [Wired](#). "But you have to be careful and sensitive. And certainly, if you're getting criticism or feedback from the community that you're representing, you should listen to it and take notes."

Heated Rivalry drops new episodes Fridays on HBO Max.