

EXCLUSIVE

First look: Disney star Ross Lynch is notorious serial killer in *My Friend Dahmer*

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▶▶▶ It has become a tradition for young Disney stars to ultimately pick a role which signals more mature professional ambitions. But few have done so quite as dramatically as *Teen Beach Movie* and *Austin & Ally* actor Ross Lynch, who plays serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer in the new film, *My Friend Dahmer*.

Written and directed by Marc Meyers, the movie is based on [Derf Backderf's nonfiction graphic novel](#) of the same name, in which the author recalls his high school friendship with "Jeff" Dahmer, who would go on to murder 17 men between 1978 and 1991.

"It's the story *before* the story we're all familiar with," says director Meyers, who shot some of the film in the actual house where Dahmer grew up. "The book is this haunting, sad, funny, true look at Jeffrey Dahmer's high school years, growing up in the suburbs of Akron, Ohio, in the mid-to-late '70s — and that's exactly what this film has become. I went through an exhaustive search to find an

actor who I believed could play the role of Jeff Dahmer as a high school kid. I must have met with over 80 actors for the two main teen roles. I just locked into Ross when I met him. I felt that he both had the versatility as an actor and the look. I thought it was exciting that he was just ending his run as the lead of a Disney show and was the lead of their *Teen Beach Movie* franchise — but he looks like Jeff! And then, even more so, when you put some glasses on him.”

Turns out, the filmmaker is not the only person who thinks the *Austin & Ally* star looks eerily similar to America’s most infamous mass murderer.

“Some of the real friends that grew up with Dahmer in the ‘70s — the author of the book and a couple of others — came by set, and they confirmed for me how hauntingly similar Ross Lynch looks to the actual Dahmer,” says Meyers. “So much so, the author of the book asked him, ‘If you want to talk to me, please take your glasses off, because it’s freaking me out.’”

You can exclusively see Lynch as the bespectacled Dahmer in the photo above. *My Friend Dahmer* will make its world premiere at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival in the VIEWPOINTS Program.