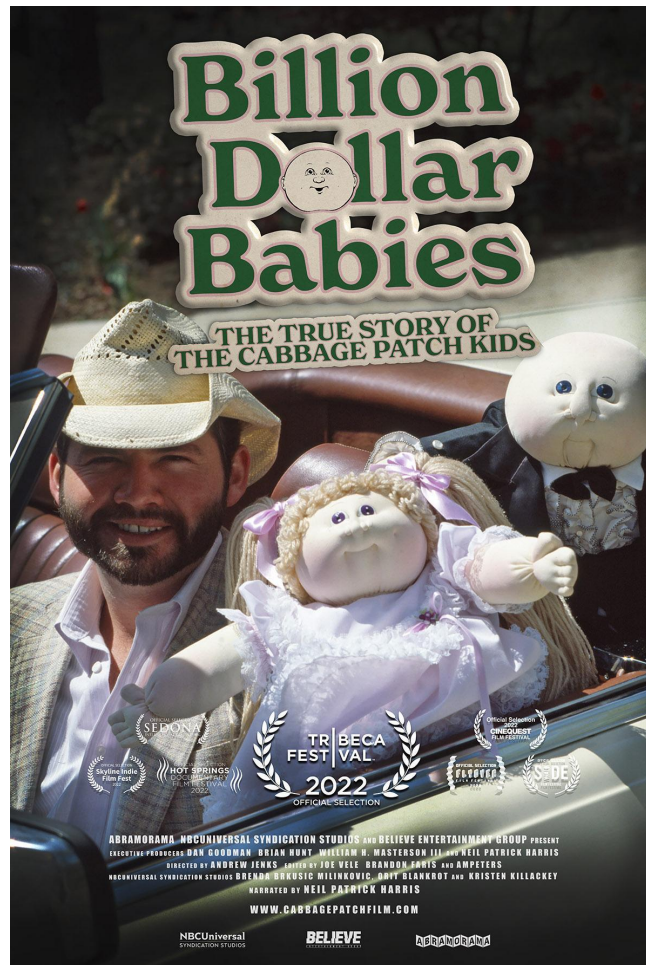


ABRAMORAMA

NBCUniversal
SYNDICATION STUDIOS

BELIEVE
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Present



Directed by Andrew Jenks
Narrated by Neil Patrick Harris

RT: 94 mins

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Doll hospitals, cabbage "births," a four-year legal battle over the origin of the idea and a BILLION-dollar toy brand that put the wheels of modern-day Black Friday shopping riots into motion. This is the unbelievable true story you never knew about the toy craze that started it all, the Cabbage Patch Kids.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Before the Cabbage Patch Kids, no one could have imagined a world where police would need to break up fights between rampaging adults in toy stores. But after the Cabbage Patch Kids, every manufacturer in the world was desperate for their own "riot-worthy" toy. Everything had changed, and we were never going back.

"Billion Dollar Babies: The True Story of the Cabbage Patch Kids" is the evolution of that change, told through the lens of what is arguably the most beloved toy of the 1980s. It's one filled with doll hospitals with delightfully attentive staff tending to every need of the "babies" birthed from a cabbage patch before their adoptions, dangerous counterfeit dolls and intense U.S. Customs raids, inevitable black-market sales, a glut of spin-off products, severe doll shortages and a rabid media frenzy that gave rise to a BILLION-dollar toy brand unlike anything the world had ever seen. Oh, and did we mention the "custody battle" over the origin of the idea? An unassuming and relatively unknown artist from rural Kentucky filed suit claiming she was the true creator of the dolls, setting off a contentious four-year legal battle over the Kids.

This is the story you never knew about the dolls that stole America's heart... and turned us all into total maniacs.

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

It was 1983. And according to the Los Angeles Times, the Cabbage Patch Kids, what most people would consider nothing more than a doll, had become "the most sought-after toy in American history."

It was madness, a sustained, enduring frenzy that gripped much of the American public, more widespread, deep, and lasting than any toy craze the United States had ever witnessed. People Magazine called the scenes of parents who were literally fighting in stores for the doll "dog-eat-dog anarchy." The Wall St Journal said it was "mass hysteria." The stories around the nation of just what people, specifically parents, were doing to get their hands on the doll were pouring in. A woman, knowing she'd be battling other parents when a local store opened, had hired a football player to block for her as she ran through the aisles searching for one. A store owner in Pittsburgh was forced to arm himself with a baseball bat to keep customers away. One man flew to London just to get his hands on the doll. A religious man down south had his Cabbage Patch Kid baptized, or as he said "Cabbagaetized." The company that sold the dolls (Coleco) started hiring Boeing 747's just to get more Kids from the factories in Asia to the stores in America. In fact, the mania may just be the first example of modern-day Black Friday.

I couldn't help but ask two things: why did this happen and how did this happen?

First, I wanted to find Xavier Roberts, the man credited with creating the Cabbage Patch Kids. Back in the early 1980's, Xavier was in his early 20's, and had become a pseudo-celebrity for his innovative creation. The Georgia born, down-to-earth doll-maker who was picked on in elementary school for being poor, whose mother didn't have enough money for his Boy Scouts uniform, was now the owner of a 30-bedroom house with two Jacuzzis, an indoor waterfall, rooftop greenhouse, and a garage designed to house his fleet of valuable classic cars. His rags to riches tale made him a shining example of what the American dream was all about and the press - Time Magazine, The Today Show, Johnny Carson - ate it up.

But the thing was that Xavier hadn't done an interview in at least 20 years. In fact, I couldn't find one interview in his career that didn't seem controlled or some sort of PR gimmick. With hardly any new videos of Xavier, much less pictures, I had trouble imagining what the 66-year-old man now looked like. So how was I going to get an interview? After months of persistence - phone calls to his high school friends, emails to people who had worked for him 40 years ago, and even hiring a private investigator - I found and convinced Roberts to do an interview. For the first time in his life, this interview would be done with no prerequisites, no limitations, and no time-limit. That part was vital.

Because in the leadup to our interview, another story started to take shape. As it turned out, there was a lawsuit from 1981 in which a relatively unknown artist and doll-maker, Martha Nelson Thomas, claimed she had been ripped off. After contacting the National Archives in Atlanta, I read hundreds of pages of the trial transcripts, in addition to transcripts of phone logs, depositions, and copyrights claims. I realized Thomas had a case. After all, her Doll Babies, which she created in the late 1970's, looked eerily similar to Xavier's Cabbage Patch Kids. Her dolls even had a similar premise to his as each doll was to be treated like a human. They were given unique names and often came with papers to certify, or reinforce, their human-like characteristics. Perhaps most damning, the two doll makers had actually crossed paths and done business together years before Xavier went on to "create" his Kids. So before meeting Xavier, I took

a trip with my camera crew to Martha's hometown in Kentucky. Martha passed in 2013, so we interviewed her children, her friends, even her lawyer from 40 years ago.

What I discovered during this journey was an unlikely tale about American entrepreneurship, consumerism, innovation, and capitalism. A tale about two American artists, one who found great fame and raked in millions of dollars, and another who died with little money and a largely unknown body of work.

"Billion Dollar Babies: The True Story of the Cabbage Patch Kids" tells the story of how and why the Cabbage Patch Kids became an iconic doll, the ways in which they changed toy history, and unravels, for the first time, who came up with the idea of the Kids who stole America's heart.

– Director Andrew Jenks

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Andrew Jenks is an award-winning filmmaker, TV producer, author, and Peabody nominated podcaster.

At age 19, Andrew moved into an assisted living facility for two months. What started as a simple, low-budget documentary turned into an international hit, *ANDREW JENKS, ROOM 335*, premiering on HBO in January 2008. The New York Post said, "It's a gorgeous, hilarious, sad, wonderful, unblinking look at the joy of life - even at the end of it." At 21-years-old, ESPN Films financed his second documentary, the award-winning film *THE ZEN OF BOBBY V.*, which tracked Bobby Valentine, an American baseball coach who had become a national icon in Japan.

In 2010, Jenks created MTV's *WORLD OF JENKS*, focusing on stories not normally told, and was also the lead correspondent for MTV News' coverage of the 2012 Presidential Election. In 2013, Jenks teamed with Scholastic to publish his book *MY ADVENTURES AS A YOUNG FILMMAKER*.

In 2014, Andrew directed ESPN's 30/30 short film *POSTERIZED*, part of ESPN's Emmy Award-Winning series. Jenks also directed the MAC Aids Fund feature film *IT'S NOT OVER*, that premiered around the World-on-World Aids Day, including Netflix and Hulu. In 2015, CNN Films released Jenks' award-winning short film, *ALL-AMERICAN FAMILY* chronicling an all-Deaf high school championship football team.

In 2015, Jenks premiered his award-winning feature documentary, *dream/killer*, and subsequently created and executive produced the documentary series, *UNLOCKING THE TRUTH*, which contributed to releasing Calvin Michael Smith (wrongfully incarcerated for 20 yrs).

Andrew writes and hosts the critically-acclaimed documentary podcast series *WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?*, produced by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, which reached #1 on Apple Podcasts. He also co-writes and hosts the Peabody nominated podcast *GANGSTER CAPITALISM*.

About NBCUNIVERSAL Syndication Studios

NBCUniversal Syndication Studios is responsible for the production, sales and distribution of NBCUniversal products to broadcast television within the United States. The division develops and produces first-run programming and distributes these shows, along with off-network content, in broadcast television as well as digital and streaming platforms. Current first-run original productions include "American Anthems," a new music-based docuseries airing nationally on PBS. Current first-run broadcast syndicated programming includes "Access Hollywood," "Access Daily," "The Kelly Clarkson Show," "Judge Jerry," "Karamo," "Maury" and "The Steve Wilkos Show."

About Believe Entertainment Group

Founded by Executive Producers Dan Goodman, William H. Masterson, III and Brian Hunt, Believe Entertainment Group is an OSCAR and EMMY Award-Winning studio based in NYC. BELIEVE won their awards for Dear Basketball, the animated short film written by the late NBA champion Kobe Bryant, scored by the prolific John Williams, and directed by Disney legend, Glen Keane. Two other BELIEVE series recently premiered including American Anthems, a four-time EMMY-nominated new doc series on PBS featuring country music stars Jennifer Nettles, Lee Brice, and Kristian Bush, among others; and Jam Van, a mixed-media kids series for YouTube Kids featuring Nicole Byer, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Daveed Diggs, Boyz II Men, Brandi Carlile and Sheryl Crow among others.

Other previous stand-out BELIEVE projects include: The LeBrons, a multi-season animated kids series with NBA champion, LeBron James and Between Me and My Mind, a feature-length documentary feature on Phish front-man Trey Anastasio, currently available on Amazon Prime. Trilith Studios and U.K. based ITV are BELIEVE'S two largest shareholders and board members.

About Abramorama

Abramorama is a preeminent global distribution, marketing and sales partner for nonfiction and music films. An innovator in creating and implementing personalized worldwide distribution, marketing, and live and event cinema, Abramorama provides customized strategic services to filmmakers, networks, record labels, artists and IP owners, across all platforms and in all territories. In its over 25+ years of operation, Abramorama has collaborated with many of the most respected global brands in entertainment, including The Beatles, Dolly Parton, Led Zeppelin, Metallica, Pearl Jam, Neil Young, Melanie Martinez, Laurie Anderson, Jimi Hendrix, Green Day, National Geographic, AARP, Apple, Amazon, HBO, Hulu, Universal Music Group, Atlantic Records, Warner Music Group, and Sony, among others. Through a powerful global network of cinemas, digital media outlets, and affinity marketing partners, Abramorama strategically implements a unified distribution and audience activation plan for each title. Abramorama is expert at maximizing reach, engagement, marketing spends, and Impact ROI for films created for target audiences. For more information, visit abramorama.com.

CREDITS

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William H. Masterson III
Neil Patrick Harris

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Brian Hunt

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Associate Producer

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Consulting Producer

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Xavier Roberts
Jack Wheat
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Hair & Makeup Surjaya Cruz

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C Camera Alex Glustrom

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APPALL

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MUSIC

"Billion Dollar Babies"

Written by: Michael O. Bruce, Alice Cooper, Reginald F. Vinson

Performed by Alice Cooper

Courtesy of Warner Records

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

"Babyland"

Music & lyrics by John Forster

Published by Limousine Music Co. (ASCAP)

Produced and mixed by Bryan Master

Performed by Bryan Master, Eric Sanchez, Tim Connell and Greg O'Connor

Recorded at SOUND+FISSION Studios

"Opportunities (Let's Make Lots Of Money)"

Written by Christopher Lowe, Neil Tennant

Published by Cage Music Ltd

Courtesy of Sybersound Records through arrangement with Covered Records, Inc.

"I Wanna Be Rich"

Written By Vincent Calloway; Reginald Calloway; Melvin Arthur Gentry; Belinda G Lipscomb

Performed by Calloway

Published by BMG Platinum Songs US (BMI)

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"Carol Of The Bells" (Metal Version)

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"Kids In America"

Written by Marty Wilde, Ricky Wilde

Performed by Kim Wilde

Published by Finchley Music Corp

Licensed From Cherry Red Records

"The Cabbage Patch"

Written by Cleveland Bell

Performed by Gucci Crew II

Courtesy of Essential Media Group

Published by Henstone Publishing, Beacon Copyrights & Musicworks

By Arrangement with Blackwatch Dominion

4 Stories Music

APM Music

Earmotion

Extreme Music

"Twisted Robots"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Minor Mystery"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Neon Dreams"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Sheer Drop"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Ace Invader"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Hello Quantum"

Published by Audio Network

Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Every Day A Smile 2"

Published by Audio Network
Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Piano-Concerto-21-Andante-6"

Published by Audio Network
Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Luminaries"

Published by Audio Network
Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Spirit of the forest 3"

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"Mysteries"

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"Waltz Detective 4 60"

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Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Alt ID"

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Recording courtesy of Audio Network

"Memory of a Memory"

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Recording courtesy of Audio Network

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The National Black Doll Museum of History and Culture
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