

THE KIDS GROW UP

a film by Doug Block

a Copacetic Pictures and Hard Working Movies production

in association with

HBO Documentary Films

ZDF in cooperation with ARTE

Channel 4

VPRO



Produced by

DOUG BLOCK and LORI CHEATLE

Running Time: 90 Minutes

www.thekidsgrowup.com

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Capsule Synopsis

Documentary filmmaker Doug Block (*51 Birch Street*) has captured much of his daughter Lucy's life – and their relationship – on camera. Now his only child is 17 and preparing to leave home for college. Lucy's imminent departure is the springboard for *The Kids Grow Up*, a funny, moving and deeply personal look at modern-day parenting.

Synopsis

In his internationally acclaimed documentary *51 Birch Street*, Doug Block examined his parents' seemingly ordinary marriage and uncovered a universal story about the mystery of family. *The Kids Grow Up* is a follow-up and companion piece in which Block turns his lens on his family once more, this time from his own vantage point as a parent, to tell a larger story about fathers and daughters, marriage and modern-day parenting.

Lucy Block is Doug's only child, and over the years he has captured much of her life – and their close relationship – on camera. An established documentary filmmaker, Block has long mulled incorporating the footage into a film some day about the parenting experience. It's only when Lucy turns 17, however, and is a year away from leaving home for college, that he begins to fully understand the real subject of his film – the emotionally-charged period when children separate from their parents and parents must separate from their children.

The Kids Grow Up is Block's funny and deeply moving account of his year of learning to let go. It turns out to be an unexpectedly turbulent time of transition for the entire family. Doug's step-son Josh (14 years Lucy's elder) has a child, making Doug and his wife Marjorie first-time grandparents. Marjorie endures an episode of clinical depression, her first in 13 years. Lucy has her first serious romantic relationship, then grapples with whether or not to break it off before she leaves. And Doug is in complete denial of his advancing age even as he braces for Lucy's departure and the looming empty nest.

Fluidly moving back and forth in time, we see Lucy blossom from precocious kid to serious and self-possessed young woman over the course of the film. In the process, the eternal father-child struggle for control versus independence plays out through the camera with great warmth and humor. Marjorie expresses frustration with Doug over his “buddy-buddy” relationship with Lucy, and how it signifies a larger unwillingness to grow up. Meanwhile, Doug's ongoing effort to come to terms with the rigidly authoritarian upbringing of his own father illustrates just how far parenting styles have changed over the generations.

Told from Block's engaging first-person perspective, *The Kids Grow Up* breathes fresh insight into the wonderful and daunting relationship between parent and child. Sons and daughters frequently make films about their parents, including Block himself. This time, however, a parent is making a film about his child, albeit in an era when kids grow up faster and “baby boomer” adults stay younger longer. As Doug grapples, often less than gracefully, with letting go of his daughter, it becomes apparent that *The Kids Grow Up* is not just Lucy's coming of age story but very much her father's as well.

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Director's Statement

It's always a challenge to make a personal documentary, and it's a particular challenge to make one about your family. I'm not talking so much about the issue of capturing family members behaving naturally on camera. Mine may get on me occasionally about having a camera in their face, but mostly they've pretty much learned to ignore me. Or else I've just worn them down over time.

To me, the real difficulty is in taking a collection of moments that are essentially private and intimate, shaping them into a strong, dramatic story (where the juicier the conflict the better) and putting it out into the world where it will be subjected to potentially harsh public scrutiny.

When making my previous film, *51 Birch Street*, I initially had vast reservations about revealing the deep unhappiness at the root of my parents' seemingly ideal marriage. I got past them by focusing on how potentially universal such a situation is in families, and the powerful impact it might have if I could depict my own honestly and compellingly. Fortunately, the film received extraordinary international acclaim, and I'm happy to say I'm still welcome at Thanksgiving dinners.

If anything, the public unveiling of *The Kids Grow Up* is even more daunting than *51 Birch Street*. My daughter Lucy is very emotionally exposed in several scenes. And when it comes to your child, your parental instinct is to protect (even if Lucy is 20 now and very much an adult). My wife Marjorie is extremely vulnerable, as well. Not just because the looming empty nest casts a degree of anxiety over our marriage. She is also shown, and on one occasion briefly interviewed, in the midst of a serious depressive episode that at times left her unable to get out of bed. Even with her permission, I wrestled internally for two months before allowing myself to point a camera in her direction in that condition.

In the end, however, I feel there is nothing more powerful or universal than authentically sharing who we are as human beings with one another. I'm grateful that my wife and daughter feel the same way, and trust that I'll be present their lives and experiences in a story that they'll be proud of. Marjorie, who has always been open about her history of depression, especially appreciates that the film will help de-stigmatize the subject by depicting someone who suffers a depressive episode and then recovers without making a big fuss about it.

And so I've made another extremely personal documentary about my family, one that I intended to both stand alone from *51 Birch Street* and to function as a companion piece. No film is ever easy to make. But given the pitfalls inherent in the genre, I wouldn't have done it unless I firmly believed *The Kids Grow Up* has the potential to get out every bit as widely as *51 Birch Street*, and have just as profound an impact on audiences the world over.

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Filmmaker / Crew Bios

Doug Block (Director, producer, camera) is a New York-based filmmaker whose work includes some of the most acclaimed feature documentaries of the past 18 years.

Doug's most recent film, *51 Birch Street*, was named one of the 10 Best Films of the Year by the New York Times, The Chicago Sun-Times and the Ebert & Roeper Show, and it was selected as one of the outstanding documentaries of the year by the National Board of Review, the Boston Society of Film Critics and Rolling Stone Magazine. The film garnered numerous awards, including Best Overall Program at the 2008 Banff Television Awards. *51 Birch Street* screened at dozens of international film festivals, followed by a 9-month U.S. theatrical release. It aired on HBO, ZDF/Arte, Channel Four and many other stations worldwide.

Doug's first film, *The Heck With Hollywood!* screened at leading international film festivals before being released theatrically in the U.S. by Original Cinema. *The Heck With Hollywood!* was broadcast internationally and on PBS and Bravo in the U.S. His second feature was the Emmy-nominated film *Home Page*, a look at the early days of online culture. Called "Groundbreaking" by Roger Ebert, the film screened at the Sundance and Rotterdam Festivals and was broadcast on HBO, IFC and in Europe after a theatrical release.

His credits as producer and cameraman include: *Silverlake Life* (Sundance Grand Jury Prize, Peabody, Prix Italia), *Jupiter's Wife* (Sundance Special Jury Award, Emmy), *A Perfect Candidate*, *Love & Diane* (Independent Spirit Award), *Paternal Instinct* (Best Feature Film – NY Gay & Lesbian Film Festival) and *A Walk Into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory* (top doc prizes at the Berlin and Tribeca film festivals). He is currently producing Amy Hardie's *Dangerous Dreams*, a co-production with Channel Four, ZDF/Arte, VPRO and Scottish Screen.

Doug is also the founder and co-host of *The D-Word*, a popular international online discussion forum for documentary professionals.

Lori Cheatle (Producer) founded Hard Working Movies to produce innovative films with great stories, with a focus on feature documentaries. The films that she's produced or directed have screened theatrically, in festivals and on TV in over 50 countries, and have been broadcast on HBO, PBS, Showtime, The Sundance Channel, Starz, Channel 4 UK, the BBC, CBC, Canal+, and other stations worldwide.

Lori produced Doug Block's personal documentary *51 Birch Street*, which was one of the best-reviewed films of 2006. The film premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and screened at top international film festivals before playing for 9 months in US theaters. It was co-produced by HBO and ZDF/arte. The DVD is distributed by Image Entertainment.

Other documentary producing credits include: *This Land Is Your Land* (also co-directed), distributed by

Argot Pictures. *This Land* screened internationally in theaters, festivals and at large-scale special event screenings. The film was featured in exhibits at Exit Art Gallery, the Silverman Gallery and it was selected for the 2006 Whitney Biennial; *Dashiell Hammett. Detective Writer.* (dir. Joshua Waletzky) a biography of the author, with David Straithairn, Kathleen Turner, Ring Lardner, Jr. The film was broadcast on American Masters and is distributed by Koch-Lorber Video; Producer and co-Director of *From Swastika To Jim Crow* (PBS) for Pacific Street Films, which screened at over 200 festival and special screenings, including The National Civil Rights Museum, Lincoln Center and MoMA; *Summer in Ivey* (dir. Tamar Rogoff/Daisy Wright); and others.

Together with Doug Block, Lori was Consulting Producer on the Emmy Award winning *Have You Seen Andy?* (dir. Melanie Perkins, for HBO); co-Executive Producer of *American Harmony*, which was nominated for a 2008 IDA Award for Best Music Documentary; and Supervising Producer of the web-based shorts series *Essays in Documentary*.

Hard Working Movies is currently producing a variety of projects on subjects ranging from politics to pop culture.

Maeve O'Boyle (Editor) was born in Dublin, Ireland. In 1995 she received an honors degree in English and Drama Studies at Trinity College Dublin. After graduating, she moved to New York City to work in Television and Film Production. Over the next two years she worked her way up to becoming an editor mainly at New York Times Television. Some of her early editing work includes Women Docs for TLC, Declining by Degrees and History Detectives for PBS and Crisis Zone for National Geographic.

In 2004, Maeve took a year out to complete a Masters in Film and Television Production at Dublin City University, where she was awarded first class honors. Subsequent editing work includes Left of the Dial for HBO, which was nominated for a News and Documentary Emmy for Best Documentary in 2006. She also worked for Icon Productions on a 10 hour documentary series called Carrier for PBS, a feature documentary entitled Victory over Darkness which premiered at the Heartland Film Festival in 2008 and Frontline: Heat for PBS, which won the 2009 Banff World Television award for best environmental documentary and the 2008 Overseas Press Club Whitman Bassow Award. She recently completed a job traversing the United States for Guardian Films UK, editing short pieces for the Guardian website on the 2008 US Election.

H. Scott Salinas (Composer) began his music career at the age of twelve playing with reggae and blues bands on the small island of St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands. In 1993, he left his island home to major in music at Princeton University, where he discovered jazz and classical music. After graduating from Princeton University in 1997, he continued his education at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he concentrated in scoring for picture and graduated in 2001.

In 2002, Scott was named Grand Prize Winner in the Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composers Competition and in 2003 Scott moved to Los Angeles, where he has since composed music for over a dozen feature films. His most recent film work includes: *Edison*, an action thriller starring Kevin Spacey and Morgan Freeman; the Miramax comedy, *Just Friends* starring Ryan Reynolds and Amy Smart; and Independent Spirit Award Winner, *Conventioners*. In addition to his film work, Scott has scored a variety of national commercial campaigns for major clients such as Coke, Sprite, and Phillips. In 2005,

he won an AICP award for best musical arrangement of the Olympic theme, *Bugler's Dream*, for the city of New York's 2012 Olympic bid. Scott recently received both the 2007 CLIO and AICP awards for best musical arrangement for the Coca Cola Super Bowl commercial entitled, *Videogame* and the 2008 Cannes Lion for best use of music for Old Spice, *Hungry Like A Bruce*. This is the second film Scott has scored for Doug Block and Lori Cheatle, having previously written the score for *51 Birch Street*.

Gabriel Sedgwick (Associate Producer) grew up in Stockholm, relocated to Prague to study film at FAMU, and subsequently crossed the Atlantic to pursue a Masters in Film Production in New York. After receiving his degree, Gabriel directed and produced material for SVT, Swedish Television, as well as producing *August the First* (dir: Lanre Olabisi), a feature-length drama which screened at over 25 film festivals including the South by Southwest Film Festival and The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The film earned top prizes at the Milwaukee Film Festival, San Francisco Black Film Festival, and UrbanWorld Film Festival, as well as receiving an IFP Gotham Award nomination and screening at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

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Credit List

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Written, Produced and Directed by
DOUG BLOCK

Produced by
LORI CHEATLE

Edited and Co-Written by
MAEVE O'BOYLE

Music by
H. SCOTT SALINAS

Co-producer
FRANK VAN DEN ENGEL
Zeppers Film & TV

Associate Producer
GABRIEL SEDGWICK

Camera
DOUG BLOCK

Assistant Editor
REBECCA ISRAEL

Trailer Editor
JOAQUIN PEREZ

Additional Camera
LUCY BLOCK
MARJORIE SILVER
JOSH SILVER

Title Designer
MIKE ROBERTS

Visual Effects
CHRISTOPHER RIEMANN

Narration Recording
T GRIFFIN

On Line Editor/Colorist
STEVE PEQUIGNOT
Glue Editing & Design, NYC

Sound Edit and Mix
MARGARET CRIMMINS
GREG SMITH
Dog Bark Sound

Outreach Coordinator
JOSH SOBEL

Production Counsel
THOMAS SELZ and LISA DAVIS
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz PC

Distribution Advisor
JOSH BRAUN

Accountant
RUSSEL MANTELL
Kweit, Mantell & Delucia, LLP

Transcriptions
SARA BARNES

Production Assistants
MIKAJLA RANKOVIC
VANESSA TOLKIN

Home Movie Footage and Still Photographs Courtesy of
MIKE BLOCK
MINA BLOCK
JOHN GOLOMB

THE KIDS GROW UP PRESS KIT

Featuring

LUCY BLOCK
DOUG BLOCK
MARJORIE SILVER
MIKE BLOCK
CAROL "KITTY" BLOCK
JOSH SILVER
DAVID SILVER
ROMAIN GEORGE
ELLEN BLOCK
KAREN ENGWALL
DOUG ENGWALL
JOHN GOLOMB
MINA BLOCK
MARGARET SILVER
ANNE MARINO

BERNARD TELSEY
MICHAEL COLBERG
MARIANA ALEXANDER
JERA FOSTER-FELL
LIZ DOLAN
LUCY LYDON
GEORGIA STOCKWELL
ROBERT "BO" LAUDER
DAVID ENGWALL
BETH ENGWALL
SHARON SCHUSTER
JAHMIL EADY
CAROL EADY
and
FEATHERS

Additional Music

PATRIK ANDRÉN
ASAF SAGIV

String Orchestrations and Conducting

ARTURO RODRIGUEZ

Additional Orchestrations and Percussion

JACKSON GREENBERG

String Contracting and Concert Master

MARK ROBERTSON

Score Recording

MILTON GUTIÉRREZ

Score Mixing

H. SCOTT SALINAS

Additional Score Mixing

TOBIAS ENHUS

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for VPRO
Executive Producer
BARBARA TRUYEN

for Channel 4
Executive Producers
TABITHA JACKSON
KATIE SPEIGHT

for ZDF/Arte
Executive Producers
ANNE EVEN
DORIS HEPP

for Home Box Office
Supervising Producer
LISA HELLER

Executive Producer
SHEILA NEVINS

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