

THE KIDS GROW UP

a film by Doug Block

a Copacetic Pictures and Hard Working Movies production

in association with

HBO Documentary Films

and

ZDF in cooperation with ARTE

in association with

Channel 4 and VPRO



Produced by

DOUG BLOCK and LORI CHEATLE

Running Time: 90 Minutes

www.thekidsgrowup.com

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Capsule Synopsis

As his only child Lucy prepares to leave home for college, documentary filmmaker Doug Block (*51 Birch Street*) struggles with letting go. Drawing on three generations of evocative family footage, *The Kids Grow Up* is an intimate and moving first-person look at parenthood in an age when dads are increasingly involved in their children's lives.

Synopsis

In his internationally acclaimed documentary *51 Birch Street*, Doug Block examined his parents' seemingly ordinary 54-year marriage and uncovered a universal story about the mystery of family. *The Kids Grow Up* sees Block turn his lens on his family once more, this time from his own vantage point as a father, to tell a larger story about modern-day parenthood and marriage.

Lucy Block is Doug's only child and, like many involved camcorder-era dads, he videotaped frequently with her as she grew up, capturing their close bantering relationship on camera in the process. An established documentary filmmaker, Block long mulled incorporating the footage into a longitudinal look at the parenting experience. It's only when Lucy turns 17, however, and is a year away from leaving home for college, that his focus turns to the emotionally fraught period when children separate from their parents and parents must separate from their children. *The Kids Grow Up* is Block's intimate and moving account of his year of learning to let go.

It turns out to be a turbulent time of transition for the entire family. Doug's stepson Josh (14 years Lucy's elder) has a child, making Doug and his wife Marjorie first-time grandparents. Marjorie endures a severe episode of clinical depression, her first in 13 years, then fully recovers. Lucy has her first serious romantic relationship, only to grapple with whether or not to break it off before leaving for college. And Doug's fixation on Lucy's departure masks a deeper anxiety about aging and the looming empty nest.

Moving seamlessly between past, present and the fast-approaching future, we see Lucy blossom from precocious kid to serious and self-possessed young woman over the course of the film. Along the way, the eternal father-daughter struggle for control plays out through the camera with warmth and humor (and occasional irritation). Marjorie candidly informs Doug that his "buddy-buddy" relationship with Lucy signifies a larger unwillingness to grow up. Meanwhile, Doug's ongoing effort to come to peace with his aging, rigidly authoritarian father, contrasted with Josh's eagerness to be a stay-at-home dad, illustrates just how far notions of fatherhood have shifted 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, as well as the highs and lows of long-term marriage. As Doug struggles, 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

Many years ago, when I set out to become a proverbial “big-time” movie director, the last thing I expected was that my greatest filmmaking success until now would result from an intensely personal documentary about my relatively ordinary family.

51 BIRCH STREET (released in 2006) was a film I never intended to make. I mean, who in their right mind would actually plan to make a documentary about their parents’ marriage? Certainly not me, at least until a series of shocking discoveries in the wake of my mother’s unexpected death caused me to reevaluate every assumption I had about marriage and family. In the process, I realized I had accidentally tapped into a story that would resonate with audiences throughout the world.

In stark contrast, THE KIDS GROW UP was a film that percolated in the back recesses of my brain for a long time. My daughter Lucy has always had a natural camera presence, and I couldn’t help but think there was a funny and fascinating documentary to be made about parenting over the long haul from a father’s perspective. The only problem was that I could never quite get a handle on what form such a film might take. It never seemed enough to simply see a little girl grow up on camera.

As the years (and other film projects) flew by, and a total of about 50 hours of footage accumulated, it remained a subject in search of a story. Which was fine by me. I was perfectly happy to have captured bits and pieces of my only child’s life, and a loose chronicle of our close and loving relationship, if only for posterity.

Then Lucy turned 17, and one morning it hit me that there was only one year left before she would leave the nest for college. In that moment, anticipating and dreading the emotion-packed moment of goodbye that parenthood inevitably leads to, I suddenly envisioned THE KIDS GROW UP almost fully formed. It would no longer be just a light and humorous look at a father-daughter relationship playing out through my camera over time. Lurking underneath was a more bittersweet story about a baby boomer parent struggling with aging and loss and learning how to let go. Eventually, the context broadened to include three generations of fathers, illustrating how exponentially more involved dads have become in their children’s lives. (With the film premiering on HBO on Father’s Day, I’m particularly happy to have the spotlight focused on that larger cultural context.)

It’s extremely challenging to make personal documentaries, and THE KIDS GROW UP was, if anything, even more daunting than 51 BIRCH STREET. As the film makes clear, Lucy had a healthy amount of ambivalence about being filmed at certain moments, and I tried to be as sensitive to her feelings as possible. My rule of thumb was to begin shooting only when she was okay with it and to turn the camera off whenever she told me to. Still, Lucy is emotionally vulnerable in several scenes and, when it comes to your child, your parental instinct is to protect. Lucy was the first to see different cuts of the film and was given multiple opportunities to pull the plug on it if she felt it would adversely impact her life (fortunately, she didn’t). The only way I could make THE KIDS GROW UP was to be a father first and filmmaker second, although, as the film shows, I certainly tried my best to be both at the same time.

My wife Marjorie is very exposed in the film, as well, and not just because the looming empty nest cast a degree of anxiety over our marriage. She is 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 knowing she would want me to, I wrestled internally for two months before I was able to point a camera in her direction in that condition.

Marjorie has always been open about her history of depression, and especially appreciates that the film will help de-stigmatize mental illness by depicting someone who suffers a depressive episode and then recovers fully without making a big fuss about it.

And so I've made another very personal film about my family, one that I hope will stand alone from 51 BIRCH STREET and, at the same time, work as a companion piece. Having produced a number of personal documentaries, as well as having made three of my own (and in the middle of making yet another), I fully understand the pitfalls involved. However, the more I've travelled with these films around the world, the more I've come to realize that there's nothing more powerful or affecting than authentically sharing who we are as human beings with one another. I'm proud and grateful that my wife and daughter feel the same way, and that they trusted I would present their lives and experiences on film in an authentic and, hopefully, entertaining way.

Finally, one regrettable aspect of making first-person docs is that people often come away from them with the misconception that I create them by myself. Happily, I had a number of extraordinarily talented collaborators who made the film infinitely better and the process so much more enjoyable. To composer H. Scott Salinas, associate producer Gabriel Sedgwick, editor Maeve O'Boyle and, particularly, my producing partner Lori Cheatle, I give my heartfelt thanks and everlasting appreciation.

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Filmmaker / Crew Bios

Doug Block (Director, Producer, Writer, Camera) is a New York-based filmmaker whose work includes some of the most acclaimed feature documentaries of the past two decades.

Doug's previous film, *51 Birch Street*, was named one of the Ten Best Films of the Year by the New York Times, The Chicago Sun-Times and the Ebert & Roeper Show, and 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 also 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 throughout the world via HBO, ZDF/Arte, Channel Four and many other networks (including both Israeli television and Al Jazeera).

Doug's first film, *The Heck With Hollywood!* screened at dozens of leading international film festivals before being released theatrically in the U.S. by Original Cinema. It 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 for its unprecedented cross-platform release (it was the first feature film to stream and sell on the internet on the day of its theatrical release), the film screened at the Sundance and Rotterdam Festivals and was broadcast on HBO, IFC and in Europe.

His credits as a producer include: *Silverlake Life* (Sundance Grand Jury Prize, Peabody, Prix Italia), *Jupiter's Wife* (Sundance Special Jury Award, Emmy), *Love and Diane* (Independent Spirit Award), *Paternal Instinct* (Best Feature Film – NY Gay & Lesbian Film Festival), *A Walk Into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory* (top doc prizes at the Berlin and Tribeca film festivals) and *The Edge of Dreaming*, which aired on POV last fall. He is currently executive producing Jon Foy's Sundance award-winner (for best director) *Resurrect Dead: The Mystery of the Toynbee Tiles*, which is scheduled to open theatrically in the North America on August 3rd.

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

Lori Cheatle (Producer) founded Hard Working Movies to produce innovative films with great stories. 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 on many 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), which is 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. Called by The Boston Herald, "An inspiring portrait of race relations in America", the film showed at over 200 special screenings, including The National Civil Rights Museum, Lincoln Center and MoMA; *Summer in Ivye* (dir. Tamar Rogoff/Daisy Wright); and *Sidney Lumet: An American Director* (dir. Joel Sucher and Steve Fischler) for Pacific Street Films and Paramount Pictures.

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, including *Live At The Fillmore East*, directed by Academy Award winner Leon Gast (*When We Were Kings*) and filmmaker/photographer Amalie R. Rothschild.

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

This is a fiscally sponsored project of the International Documentary Association

This film is Co-financed by the CoBO Fund

THE KIDS GROW UP PRESS KIT

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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