

Introductions/Ice-Breaking

Josh: Welcome to Not Another 2001 Movie Podcast, a show exploring movies released during the first year of a chaotic century. Today, we're resubscribing to cable TV.

I'm Josh.

Slate: I'm Slate.

Josh: Our resident child-hater Allison isn't with us today but we've got a tremendous guest host who couldn't be more fitting for today's bonus episode. We're talking about two Disney Channel Original Movies with journalist Ashley Spencer, whose book DISNEY HIGH: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE RISE AND FALL OF DISNEY CHANNEL'S TWEEN EMPIRE chronicles ... well, the subtitle says it, y'know?

Ashley, we start our main-line episodes with an ice-breaker. So as you tell folks more about yourself, I'd also like to hear about your favorite Disney Channel show.

Ashley: *wax poetically for as long as you'd like and plug away to your heart's content*

Josh and Slate: *we'll chime in about our favorite show*

Josh: So, regular listeners know our bonus episodes are looser than our standard fare, and this won't be too different, but we did wanna ask Ashley a few questions before getting into our movie talk.

JOSH

- Your book touches on DCOMs frequently throughout but they, understandably, aren't a focal point outside of the heaviest hitter (*High School Musical*). I know you've probably got a whole other book's worth of anecdotes and notes just on those in your research pile — **what's the best DCOM-related nugget or two that didn't make it into the text?**
- I was a bit surprised to learn ahead of this episode that DCOMs are actually still produced, albeit with much less frequency (from 2021-2025, 11 new DCOMs were broadcast; **12 were released in 2000 and our year, 2001, had 10**). Those of course become additional fodder for Disney+, but beyond that, how does the creation and perception of those movies differ from the heyday?

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

Facts and figures (Josh takes lead)

NOTE: We don't have to read through all of this, hit the high points and we can roll this into discussion as needed. Consider this mostly background knowledge.

- **Release date:** Premiered March 9, 2001, on Disney Channel (ahead of St. Patrick's Day).
- **Directed by: Paul Hoen**, a DCOM fixture. Worked on several Nickelodeon sitcoms before helming this, his first DCOM. Later directed several others including *Tru Confessions*, *The Cheetah Girls: One World* and every film to date in the *Zombies* franchise.

- **Written by: Andrew Price** and **Mark Edward Edens** (story by Price). Price's only DCOM, IMDB credits include five episodes of *Star Trek: Voyage* and 65 episodes of *Jeopardy!* (was a producer for one episode of the newer *Pop Culture Jeopardy!*). Edens predominantly has worked in children's animation; his biggest credit is the seminal 90's *X-Men* animated series, which he co-wrote and developed. (He also worked on *Mummies Alive!*, which is *not* the mummy-related TV show our friend Merrilee enjoyed).
- **Cast:** Stars **Ryan Merriman** as Kyle Johnson, a popular high school basketball player who stumbles his way toward learning that he's half-Leprechaun and has to deal with the fallout of that. (Merriman became something of an early 2000s scream king — *Halloween: Resurrection*, *Rings*, *Final Destination 3*. Later had a recurring role in the show *Pretty Little Liars*. Has worked steadily.)

Henry Gibson stars as Kyle's leprechaun grandfather Reilly O'Reilly. (Gibson began working in the 1960s. Worked with Josh favorite Robert Altman [*The Long Goodbye*, *Nashville*] and had a long and varied career across film and TV. Died in 2009.)

Timothy Omundson plays the villainous, gold-stealing evil leprechaun Seamus McTiernen. This is Omundson's second appearance on the show (he was briefly in *Swordfish*). Has had a notable TV career (*Psych*, *Supernatural*, *Judging Amy*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*). Suffered a major stroke in 2017 but has rehabbed extensively to relearn how to walk, and has continued work in TV.

Alexis Lopez is Bonnie, a classmate whose high-achieving attitude helps spur Kyle's obsession with his family lineage.

She didn't act much longer after this, appears to work for [a real-estate PR firm](#) now.

Glendon Chatman plays Kyle's teammate/friend Russell, a bit character who ends up getting some fun glory by film's end. (Other notable film credits: *Baby Geniuses*, *Love & Basketball*. Character actor in TV predominantly since.) His dad, who appears briefly, is portrayed by Thurl Bailey, a former NBA player who spent most of his career with the Utah Jazz.

- **Produced by:** Don Schain. Noting him here because of his fun background. Started as a writer-director of sexploitation movies in the 70s (*Ginger*, *Girls Are for Loving* — [“She's got the equipment and she uses it to get the lowdown!”](#)). Migrates into TV-movie land and eventually becomes a significant figure behind several future DCOMs (later produces the *High School Musical* franchise).

Discussion

We'll keep it loose and free-flowing for 15-20 mins (or whatever occurs naturally) before transitioning. Some topics that'll probably come up...

- Inherit genius of a simple, silly premise
- Horrendous basketball scenes
- Cleveland mockery
- Its handling of cultural customs/stereotypes vs. well-intentioned messaging (and how TF did we get where we are now with movies like this airing for so long)

MOTOCROSSED

Facts and figures (Slate takes lead)

NOTE: We don't have to read through all of this, hit the high points and we can roll this into discussion as needed. Consider this mostly background knowledge.

- **Release date:** Premiered Feb. 16, 2001 on Disney Channel
- **Directed by: Steve Boyum**, who led several DCOMs ahead of this (*Johnny Tsunami*, *Mom's Got a Date with a Vampire*, *Stepsister from Planet Weird*). Longtime stunt actor and TV series director as well (still working, including for Disney — directed two episodes of 2023's *Goosebumps* series).
- **(Josh is gonna break in and take this one over briefly).**
Written by: Ann Austen and Douglas Sloan, inspired by William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Here's where we drop **our obligatory once-a-month reference to *Power Rangers***. Both of these people were instrumental to the success of that franchise; Austen started as a network executive on the original *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and Sloan was hired as an acting coach early on, primarily to work with a promising talent named Jason David Frank. They both eventually became writers for the series and remained with the show until a mid-season departure during *Power Rangers Turbo* (lots of petty drama, don't need to go into it here). BUT, when Disney stumbled into its purchase of the franchise by way of buying Fox Family Worldwide, another former show executive who'd worked with Austen and Sloan, **Jermaine Turner**, was now at Disney and helped facilitate bringing Austen and Sloan aboard to executive produce and write the first two seasons

produced abroad in New Zealand — *Power Rangers Ninja Storm* and *Power Rangers Dino Thunder* (Frank returned for the latter). Sloan's obsession with motocross helped spur this movie's development and was a major component in *Ninja Storm*. (I spoke with Austen for my book and she said something along the lines of, "Doug was really obsessed with bikes at the time.")

- **Cast:** Our lead here is **Alana Austin** as Andrea "Andi" Carson, a twin who's into the family business but whose father is decidedly not for that. Austin had a steady-ish career in film and TV but has not worked as an actor for almost two decades (lives in Miami as a normal person now at least as normal as being a mom of four can be; not to be confused for Newsmax correspondent by the same name; [fun interview with her by Back to the Best from last year](#))
- **Trevor O'Brien** plays Andrew "Andy" Carson, the other twin. He's the family's up-and-coming star racer but suffers a knee injury, leading to a switch-up that drives the flick. (Later shows up in *The Gridiron Gang* and other bit parts here and there.)
- **Mary-Margaret Humes** is their mother Geneva, who's a badass. Former Miss Florida who had a long TV career, most well known as Dawson's mother Gail Lerry in *Dawson's Creek*.
- **Timothy Carhart**, their father with the most hamfisted line reads in the movie. Another longtime working actor who's maybe most recognizable as the villainous Harlan Puckett in *Thelma & Louise*. Fresh-ish off a recurring role in TV's *Yellowstone*.

- **Riley Smith** as Dean Talon, a love interest and fellow racer. Smith appears in the 2001 feature after which this podcast is named, *Not Another Teen Movie*, as well as a variety of other character roles around this time (*Eight Legged Freaks*, *Radio*). Has had a steady career, particularly in TV (24, a revival of *90210*; he was in the criminally short-lived *Drive*). Most notable role is probably a 2007 straight-to-DVD release that after last year will forever suffer in SEO-land, *Weapons*. He starred alongside Nick Cannon and Paul Dano in a super-cheap drama (\$500k) that was in contention for Sundance's Grand Jury Prize that year.
- **Scott Terra** is Jason, the non-twin younger brother. He's also in *Eight Legged Freaks* and showed up in an episode of *Power Rangers Time Force*. He was young Matt Murdock in 2003's *Daredevil*.
- **A.J. Buckley** plays Jimmy Bottles, a small but hilarious character. Most well known for his substantial TV roles on *CSI: NY* and *SEAL Team*. Think he's the first person we've discussed who's played in an [NBA All-Star Celebrity Game](#) (2019).
- Longtime working actor **Mark Curry** is here as a very minor character; he also worked on DCOM *The Poof Point* that came out the same year. He's the only non-white cast member until...
- ... **Aloma Wright** shows up in the penultimate scene. Most widely known probably for her roles in TV (*Days of Our Lives*, *Scrubs*, *Private Practice* to name a few), she's in 2001 theatrical releases *Kingdom Come* and *The Brothers* as well as the ABC TV movie *When Billie Beat Bobby*, inspired by the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match.

- **Produced by:** George W. Perkins, who started as an associate producer on the 1983 sex comedy *Joysticks*. Predominantly worked in TV, was an executive producer on *Desperate Housewives* and the *Grey's Anatomy* spinoff *Station 19*.
- **Cinematography by:** João Fernandes, whose Wikipedia entry starts like this: “a Brazilian-born cinematographer best known for his work in the adult film industry during the Golden Age of Porn.” He was the DP on *Deep Throat* and *The Devil in Miss Jones* (under the alias “Harry Flecks”, derived from the camera model used Arriflex — shoutout to our friend Larry Treadway for that background). Fernandes DP’d a number of horror/slashers from there, including *Children of the Corn* and the the fourth *Friday the 13th* movie. Worked on several Chuck Norris features for Cannon Films.

Discussion

We’ll keep it loose and free-flowing for 15-20 mins (or whatever occurs naturally). Some probable topics of discussion ...

- cartoonishly sexist dad contrasted by kinda woke AF mom
- sibling dynamics
- is Dean Talon bisexual
- this movie as trans/queer representation ([good read from Gabe Dunn here](#))

Do these movies matter?

Typically we reserve this final space for debating whether, or how, the movie we discussed matters or impacts today — basically, what does it say about us culturally that no other film can really say? We can do that about both of these quickly, but I wanna expand it a little.

I don't think there's any debate as to the impact of Disney Channel. Ashley's book is the only argument you need, really. But I wanna dissect how Disney Channel — and to extend it, things like Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, etc. — matters, or doesn't, in 2026. What is Disney Channel's main role in the Disney flywheel these days? How long can it persist?

As a 35yo man who's way more intrigued by the history and evolution of kids TV than he probably should be, I think we're at a compelling juncture. Children's TV is oft-ignored in mainstream cultural analysis outside of heavy phenomena but, I think, is the underpinning of our society's entertainment ecosystem and has been for some time. What does it mean for us all as *that* part becomes more and more fragmented?

Outro

Josh: Thanks for waving your wands with us today, listeners. Show notes are in the description along with links to all our online hangouts. Please leave reviews on your favorite podcast app, follow us on Instagram, and watch us on YouTube!

Ashley, you've been wonderful. Please plug away again and let us know what we should be on the look out for from you in the future!

Ashley: *more plugging, more fun*

Josh: All righty, until the next time you hear us, we'll be looking for gold down by a dirt track. Bye!