



Curious George™

Production Information

For more than 65 years, one little monkey has captured the hearts and imaginations of those young—and young at heart—all over the world.

Generations have been raised on the stories of Margret and H.A. Rey's classic creation, the inquisitive little fellow who always seems to get into one scrape after another. Over 30 million copies of his books have been sold—in 17 languages including Yiddish, Afrikaans and Braille—and his original story has never been out of print since it was first published.

Now, this beloved character comes to the big screen in an all-new animated feature film from Universal Pictures, Imagine Entertainment and producer RON HOWARD: *Curious George*. In this funny and enchanting tale based on the classic books, audiences will discover how George first met The Man with the Yellow Hat and ended up following him to the big city. As in all of his published escapades, George's curiosity leads him and his new human friend into a mess of trouble. For his big-screen debut in 2006, the world's most mischievous monkey is out of the jungle, out on the town and out for adventure.

Get ready for some serious monkey business.

Lending their voice talents to *Curious George* are WILL FERRELL (*Elf*, *The Producers*) as Ted, the Man with the Yellow Hat; DREW BARRYMORE (*Charlie's Angels*, *50 First Dates*) as Maggie, the love-struck schoolteacher; DAVID CROSS (*Men in Black II*, television's *Arrested Development*) as the plotting Bloomsberry, Jr.; EUGENE LEVY (*Bringing Down the House*, *American Pie*) as the wacky inventor Clovis; JOAN PLOWRIGHT (*Enchanted April*, *101 Dalmations*) as the self-centered

diva Miss Plushbottom; and screen legend DICK VAN DYKE (*Mary Poppins*, television's *The Dick Van Dyke Show*) as aged adventurer Mr. Bloomsberry.

Red-hot recording artist JACK JOHNSON (albums *In Between Dreams*, *Brushfire Fairytales*) writes and performs his own songs written specifically for the film, putting into words and music the thoughts and feelings of George.

Producing *Curious George* with Imagine's Howard are DAVID KIRSCHNER (*An American Tail*, *Secondhand Lions*) and JON SHAPIRO (*Richie Rich*), with MATTHEW O'CALLAGHAN (*Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas*, television's *Life with Louie*) directing from a story by KEN KAUFMAN (*Space Cowboys*, *The Missing*) and MIKE WERB (*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, *The Mask*) and a screenplay by Ken Kaufman.

The film's executive producers are BONNE RADFORD (*The Road to El Dorado*), KEN TSUMURA (*The Prince of Egypt*, *The Simpsons*), JAMES WHITAKER (*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*) and DAVID BERNARDI (*Friday Night Lights*).

JULIE ROGERS (*Mulan*) serves as editor, YARROW CHENEY (*The Iron Giant*) is production designer and music is by HEITOR PEREIRA (*Something's Gotta Give*).

SYNOPSIS

In *Curious George* we meet Ted (Will Ferrell), a highly enthusiastic guide at the Bloomsberry Museum, giving a tour to a group of schoolchildren and their teacher Maggie (Drew Barrymore), who happens to be Ted's biggest fan. When the museum's owner, Mr. Bloomsberry (Dick Van Dyke), tells Ted that his beloved museum will have to be closed because of meager attendance, they decide drastic measures are needed in a last-ditch effort to save the museum: an amazing new exhibit, never before seen at any museum. Mr. Bloomsberry shows Ted his secret journal with a map to a lost shrine of the African tribe of Zagawa. Finding and bringing back the gigantic idol for an exhibition will save the museum! Ted excitedly starts planning for his trip to Africa, shopping for the proper gear and clothing, including a bright yellow safari outfit and matching hat.

But Bloomsberry, Jr. (David Cross), who would like nothing more than to see the museum converted into a parking lot, covertly sabotages the expedition—removing

important pages with the location of the idol from the secret journal—just as Ted is about to set sail.

In the jungle, a mischievous little monkey spies Ted in the distance and decides to make friends with The Man with the Yellow Hat. The two play a fun game of peek-a-boo before Ted gets down to business. He now finds what he believes to be the ancient idol, and he is shocked to find that it isn't giant at all—it is absolutely tiny! The dejected explorer sends a photograph of his discovery to Mr. Bloomsberry, who mistakenly believes the picture to be that of the enormous idol. Bloomsberry, Sr. is overjoyed, while Ted—oblivious to the mistake—is crestfallen. He finds a much-needed distraction to his worries when he succumbs to the charms of the playful monkey, and a true friendship is born. When it comes time for Ted to leave Africa, his new friend secretly stows away aboard the ship.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bloomsberry is busy making big plans at the museum to unveil the prized idol to the excited crowd. Arriving home in the big city, Ted is horrified to discover that his simian friend has followed him to his apartment building, where pets are not permitted, and has destroyed an apartment belonging to the snooty Miss Plushbottom (Joan Plowright). As if matters couldn't get worse, poor Ted is now evicted from his apartment building.

Before he has a chance to have a word with Bloomsberry, Sr. back at the museum, Ted is pushed in front of a press conference arranged by Bloomsberry, Jr. As he's about to reveal the truth about the idol, the scene is disrupted when the monkey accidentally causes the museum's dinosaur exhibit to collapse. Egged on by his son, Mr. Bloomsberry fires Ted on the spot.

Jobless and homeless, Ted is furious with this monkey who has caused so much trouble. But the monkey's childlike charm proves irresistible, and Ted finds himself even more attached to his new friend, whom he names George. With the help of his inventor pal Clovis (Eugene Levy), and an assist from George, Ted devises a plan whereby an overhead projector could make the tiny idol appear massive—giving the audience the exhibit they want to see and saving the museum from demise. But just as Ted is about to unveil it, Bloomsberry, Jr. destroys the projector and blames it on George.

Believing the worst, Ted decides he has too many problems and can't deal with a little monkey, so an animal control officer comes to take him away. As despondent George is being loaded on a cargo ship back to Africa, Maggie convinces Ted that he has made a terrible mistake in letting his best friend go. Ted quickly realizes George has brought joy to his life in the middle of his crisis and runs to the ship to save his buddy.

Overjoyed at the reunion with his human friend, George shows Ted that the tiny idol is actually the key to a secret map that will help them find the giant idol of Zagawa.

Off to Africa, the two discover the real idol and bring it to the Bloomsberry Museum, making it once again one of the city's key attractions. Ted and Maggie make up, the two Bloomsberrys start a strong relationship and, once again, George saves the day.

BEFORE THE PRODUCTION:

The History of *Curious George*

Hans Augusto Reyersbach was born on September 16, 1898, in Hamburg, Germany. From a very young age, he showed an interest in both animals and drawing. Margarete Elizabeth Waldstein was born in Hamburg on May 16, 1906, and was also interested in art, eventually studying at the famous Bauhaus Institute. The two met briefly when Hans visited her father's home and saw the young girl sliding down the banister.

After serving in World War I, Hans made a living drawing illustrations for the local circus before he moved to Brazil. There, he traveled the Amazon River and became enchanted by the troops of monkeys he found swinging from the jungle vines. While working in his family business in Rio de Janeiro selling bathtubs, he discovered that Margarete had also moved to Brazil to escape the Nazis, and they were married on August 16, 1935.

In South America, the couple shortened their names to H.A. and Margret Rey, in order to make it easier for their new countrymen to pronounce. They loved animals and briefly shared a home with two pet marmoset monkeys.

Honeymooning in Europe, the newlyweds fell in love with Paris and decided to stay there indefinitely. They set up house in a bohemian hotel in Montmartre, where H.A. worked as a newspaper cartoonist. When a publisher saw one of H.A.'s cartoons, he asked him to expand upon them—resulting in the Reys' first book, *Cecily G. and the 9 Monkeys*, published in 1939. H.A. came up with the ideas and the illustrations, while Margret took care of the plot and the writing. One of the book's most interesting characters was an insatiably inquisitive monkey named Fifi who always managed to find himself in trouble. The Reys fell in love with the character and decided that their next book would focus on Fifi.

According to *Curious George* historian and author Louise Borden (*The Journey that Saved Curious George*), "Some people close to the Reys have stated that Margret was a bit like George in her antics, in her zest for life. The executor of the Rey estate told me that Margret actually posed on a few occasions for Hans when he was doing his illustrations. She would put her finger in her mouth or tilt her head a certain way. Margret was a bit stocky and a bit short, and so she became George on occasion."

Hans also drew from other characters in his life. The Man with the Yellow Hat, according to Borden, "was loosely modeled after an absent-minded professor friend that they [the Reys] knew—a man who had gone to school with Hans in Germany."

As the Nazis advanced toward Paris in the blitzkrieg of May 1940, the couple, both German-born Jews, decided to flee to America where Margret's sister lived. Hans quickly cobbled together two bicycles out of spare parts for their getaway, and they escaped only hours before the Nazis invaded the city. Traveling with only a few clothes, bread and cheese and five manuscripts that included their latest book, *The Adventures of Fifi*, they bicycled for four days—sleeping in stables across the countryside. When they reached the Spanish border, they sold the bikes for train fare to Lisbon. While on the train, the Reys were detained when an official, hearing their heavy German accents, suspected they might be spies and searched through Hans' satchel. Discovering *The Adventures of Fifi*, he understood they were children's book authors and handed back their passports and visas and moved on.

From Lisbon, they found their way back to Rio de Janeiro before arriving in New York City in 1940. There, Fifi would undergo a name change when publishing giant

Houghton Mifflin offered the Reys a contract—quite rare at the time—for four illustrated children’s books by H.A. In 1941, the American publishers would introduce the unsuspecting world to the mischievous monkey known as Curious George.

H.A. and Margret would go on to author and illustrate seven *Curious George* books, spending a year laboring over each to achieve the perfect look and tone. Many of the Reys’ own interests and adventures found their way into the *Curious George* books. Both avid animal lovers, their first stop whenever they visited a new city was the zoo. Hans, just like The Man with the Yellow Hat, smoked a pipe. Just like George would in their books, the Reys’ lived among palm trees in Brazil, rode out of Paris on bicycles and left Europe on an ocean liner.

At the core of each of the books was the same general premise upon which readers came to rely: The Man with the Yellow Hat would leave George alone in the house, warning him to be careful; not being able to help himself, George would follow his curiosity into trouble. Wild adventures would ensue.

Perhaps one key to his enduring popularity is that George appeals to the desire in all of us to break the rules (just a little) in order to satisfy our curiosity. As Margret Rey observed, “George can do what kids can’t do. He can paint a room from the inside. He can hang from a kite in the sky. He can let the animals out of their pens on a farm. He can do all these naughty things that kids would like to do.”

For example, in *Curious George Rides a Bike*, he’s supposed to deliver newspapers, but instead makes boats out of all the papers, wrecks his new bike and causes pandemonium at a circus when an ostrich swallows his bugle. Ultimately, he ends up a hero after rescuing an escaped bear cub. In *Curious George Goes to the Hospital*, he wreaks havoc when the mayor visits, but manages to liven up things for a little girl who’s afraid at having to stay in the hospital. In fact, it was at the request of the Boston Children’s Hospital that the Reys create this book in the first place, in order to help prepare children for a hospital stay. After it was published, the Reys received hundreds of letters from parents thanking them and telling them how effective it was.

In 1989, Margret established the Curious George Foundation to fund programs for children who share the character’s curiosity for learning, exploring, ingenuity, opportunity and determination—with much consideration given to programs that benefit

animal preservation, the prevention of cruelty to animals and efforts to strengthen family values and ties. Although H.A. died in 1977 and Margret in 1996, both lived to see their little monkey become one of the most beloved characters in the history of children’s literature.

A Monkey Without a Tail

It should also be duly noted that Curious George, although referred to as a monkey, is in fact, a chimpanzee. At the time the Reys were writing the books, chimps, clearly lacking the distinguishing tails of monkeys, were still referred to as monkeys by most. Even though we are careful to make that distinction today, with nostalgia and respect to the classic nature of Curious George and his creators, we still refer to him as a monkey.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Every time we diverted from the essence of those H.A. Rey illustrations, it was always frustrating, it was always a little disappointing. Ultimately, we decided that instead of reinventing it, let’s celebrate it.”

—Producer Ron Howard

George first began his journey from the classic books to the screen in the early ’90s, after producer Jon Shapiro stumbled across his childhood collection of *Curious George* books in his parent’s home. “At Thanksgiving of that year, I was in New York visiting my family,” he remembers. “I was rummaging through my collection of children’s books when I came across *Curious George*. I had such a nostalgic moment, thinking to myself, ‘Wow, I really have missed George and The Man with the Yellow Hat!’”

Fueled by a desire to share with others the joy this duo had brought to his boyhood, the producer found his way to the series’ co-creator, Margret Rey. Widowed and almost 83 years of age, Mrs. Rey was quickly won over by Shapiro’s passion for the project. With a loving warning, she shared with Shapiro that, despite what many thought,

creating George's simple stories was quite challenging. In reality, she and H.A. had painstakingly crafted the books through numerous drafts with her modeling exhaustive poses and his finely tuned sketches.

With the rights secured, Shapiro found an equally passionate producing partner in David Kirschner, who had written and executive produced the animated classic *An American Tail*. Shapiro remembers what clinched the deal: "The two of us promised Margret that only the highest quality film would be pursued for the property. We knew we had to deliver an A-list project to live up to her expectations."

Kirschner laughs, "This is one of the last great properties in the canon of children's literature. Fortunately for us, it has had the luck of being viewed as 'the prettiest girl in the class.' Everyone else thought another party had the rights to it...so it was never asked out until Jon and I came along."

However, several years would pass before they found another like-minded *Curious George* fan who thought he could provide a proper home for George. Academy Award®-winning producer Ron Howard, who, early in his directing career had scored successes with such fantasy comedies as *Splash* and *Cocoon* (this was prior to his box office smash *Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas*), was enthusiastic about joining forces to produce the project. Producing with Kirschner and Shapiro, Howard felt a feature film adaptation of the *Curious George* books was a fine match for Imagine Entertainment, the production company he shared with his partner, Academy Award®-winning producer Brian Grazer.

"Initially, we considered a live-action version of the film," offers Shapiro. "But after contacting animal trainers who told us what primates could and couldn't do, we abandoned the idea. George had to have this embraceable quality as a soft, fuzzy, lovable monkey. We didn't feel we could live up to the classic nature of a property already familiar to so many with a live action version of the film. While there are some very cute primates in the world, they just don't look like George."

The next logical stop for the production team was CGI. Computer generated imaging was coming into fashion during the late '80s and early '90s with films such as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *Jurassic Park*. Names including Tom Hanks and Adam Sandler were suggested for the CGI voices behind *The Man with the Yellow Hat*, but still

the project in development wasn't gelling. "At the time, photo realistic computer generated images were extremely expensive," shares Shapiro. "Based on the nature of the books, we would have to create a 75- to 80-minute film where the majority of screen time was with a CGI George." CGI work also didn't lend itself to the simplistic, primary colors and painstakingly detailed hand drawings of H.A. Rey.

With the project stalled, it would be several years before Imagine and Universal would revisit George. Producer Howard knew it was a good fit for his studio, known for making quality films, but he wanted the timing to be perfect. "Brian Grazer and I have always felt that there was just magic in that relationship," he notes. "George's unabiding curiosity was not only something that was really relatable for kids, parents could relate to it because that curiosity gets kids into all kinds of trouble. It [curiosity] was also something to celebrate and promote.

"There's something adorable about young creatures," he continues. "Human beings, monkeys, puppies, kittens—poking their head around a corner, trying to get in under a box, nudging a door until it opens and trying to see what's on the other side."

Howard explains, "We've looked at it in so many different ways—live action, 3-D animation—and we finally arrived at 2-D animation, which is a little surprising in this day and age, except it seems so utterly appropriate for *Curious George*. We've tried all kinds of looks—changing George, making George a completely different kind of character, just figuring out how George should look. And every time we diverted from the essence of those H.A. Rey illustrations, it was always frustrating, it was always a little disappointing. Ultimately, we decided that instead of reinventing it, let's celebrate it and we'll put together a narrative storyline that works well and allows us to learn more about George and certainly more about The Man with the Yellow Hat. This allows us to explore their relationship, but more than anything else, lets George get into a lot of trouble in a very entertaining way."

"We plowed on through," Kirschner remembers. "Between the live action, animatronic versions and the CGI, there have been several iterations of George. But our timing could not be better. So many companies have jumped on the 'all-CGI cartoon' bandwagon, a lot have forgotten the art of good storytelling through traditional animation. If there's a project that belongs in 2-D, *Curious George* is it."

The story and design both came down to George's basic curiosity and how to translate that into a feature-length film that kept the audience's interest and delight. Imagine's Academy Award®-winning producer Brian Grazer explains it succinctly: "Curiosity is a learning curve. It's about scratching away at something that you don't know what's inside. And that can be jarring; it can take you off balance. It can take away your power base, but it always gets you to a better place."

When it was decided that the film would be created in 2-D animation, once again a series of writers took turns trying to come up with a screenplay that would be faithful to the Reys' books, while compelling enough to sustain a family audience's attention for a 75- to 80-minute running time. Unlike other feature film adaptations of classic children's stories, it was important to the studio that this film not in any way stray from a wholesome, straightforward course when it came to tone or language. There would be no off-color humor or edginess, nothing at all to which parents of young children would worry about exposing their kids. At the same time, it needn't talk down to its audience, nor succumb to cloying sweetness. Ultimately, it was writer Ken Kaufman who fashioned the screenplay—based on a story by Kaufman and Mike Werb—that was the sort of lively comedy-adventure worthy of Curious George himself.

The producers had to find a director for the project who shared their vision—while having the animation experience and the ability to pull together all the creative elements necessary to tell the story. After various false starts with other directors, the producers and studio executives agreed to let Matthew O'Callaghan take the reins. Having worked at Disney as director of *Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas*, O'Callaghan—who had also served as a supervising animator on *The Little Mermaid* and created television's hilarious *Life with Louie*—brought fresh ideas and energy to the film that impressed the producers.

A father himself, O'Callaghan knew George needed to be accessible to both young children and adults who would be taking their children to the film. He felt it was vital to "stay true to the books in their graphic nature, with their bright colors and very appealing shapes. You have to look back on the books in the '40s. There were very simple color stylings and a lot of primary colors."

Director O’Callaghan feels the limiting step for George’s animation was indeed his simplicity. “The choice became very obvious, because the product generates from illustrations from the book that people are very familiar with,” he notes. Traditional animation just better represents and reflects the books that had been illustrated so many years ago. The illustrations are so pure, simple and colorful. Like George, they’re so innocent. The trouble he gets into is just because he’s curious. His curiosity leads him to bigger and greater inventions, adventures that little kids could have—just using their imagination like floating balloons over the city and going on a rocket ship.”

But animation alone wouldn’t tell the story of the mischievous monkey. The director knew the value of creative writers who could weave a curious tale based on the seven *Curious George* books by the Reys. O’Callaghan remarks, “In reviewing the books, we discovered many things...a lot about how we were going to ultimately style the film. The format for the books was The Man with the Yellow Hat would wake up in the morning, say goodbye to George, and George would go on his adventures and get into trouble. And at the very end, The Man with the Yellow Hat would come in and basically save the day. We quickly figured out that we had to structure the story as a buddy picture.”

Ron Howard recalls of the process, “George is so pure and so virtuous in his drive to find out how the world works. Every single meeting, every creative discussion ends with all of us smiling and nodding our heads. Whatever the problems might be, we leave just still believing in the character and the spirit of *Curious George*.”

A Barrel of Monkeys:
Will Ferrell Leads the Cast of Voice Talent

“Ted’s a blank canvas—a guy who’s lived his life in a box. Curious George teaches him to smell the roses along the way. They really help each other.”

—Will Ferrell

All throughout the long on-again, off-again development process for *Curious George*, one thing remained constant. Whether the film would be live action, CGI or 2-D animation, the character of Curious George would not speak. He would, however, make cute monkey noises (voiced by veteran voice actor Frank Walker) in the film.

But with George not speaking, a lot of the heavy lifting as far as dialogue was concerned would have to be done by the actor voicing the role of The Man with the Yellow Hat. The actor needed to be someone with not only box-office appeal and a distinctive voice, but a flair for the comic tone of the character as depicted in the Reys’ classic books.

Everyone came up with the same name: Will Ferrell.

Ferrell had shone in such comic roles as the naïf, displaced human in *Elf* and the wacky newscaster of *Anchorman*. Producer Shapiro felt Ferrell was the perfect fit. “Will had been discussed based on his role on *Saturday Night Live*. His genius at character-actor personae came through in live action, so why not animation?”

Ferrell jumped at the chance to be involved. “I think they had me in mind for The Man with the Yellow Hat. Which is great, because *Curious George* has always been a favorite story of mine,” he notes. “This is the first feature animation I’ve done, so Matt had this great combination of a steady hand directing me, while not stifling my improv. The advantage of this type of film is that you can go in any new direction, but it’s tough being an island out there—imagining and creating vocally what will happen with what you can’t see yet.”

The actor well remembers *Curious George* from his days in elementary school. “Whenever the teacher brought out George in school, you thought, ‘Wow, this is gonna be fun,’” he laughs. “Curious George has all the power in kids’ minds. Kids love him because they feel they get to run the adventures he has.”

Given the chance to voice Ted, The Man with the Yellow Hat (though never named in the books, he would need to be for the animated feature), Ferrell knew it would be a learning experience. He remarks, “Ted’s a blank canvas—a guy who’s lived his life in a box. Curious George teaches him to smell the roses along the way. They really help each other.”

Matt O’Callaghan explains, “With Will attached to the project, we wanted to use his comic sensibilities and his style and his humor.”

And what does every bumbling explorer need to help him sort it all out? A lovely girlfriend, of course. That is exactly what Ted finds in grade-school teacher Maggie. “We actually use the name Maggie because it comes from the name Margret, the wife of H.A. Rey,” states O’Callaghan.

The team thought who better to voice the sweet, yet strong, teacher who just wants Ted to notice her than actor Drew Barrymore—fresh from the set of her latest romantic comedy *Fever Pitch*. With Barrymore, O’Callaghan found, “She is just fantastic. With her inflection, the way she says lines, the way she tilts her head—we were filming her as we were recording her—and the way the animators took those little nuances in her performance and put them on film; she was perfect.”

Every child’s playmate, Curious George had a special effect on Barrymore: she was overjoyed when she found out she was cast as Maggie—and by what was in store for the lovelorn schoolteacher and Ted. “I loved Curious George as a kid,” she offers. “I was so excited when I got the phone call to do this. You see, Maggie is very much smitten with Ted. And though she puts it under the guise of weekly field trips, she just has this huge, red, beating heart for him.”

Ferrell comments, “Maggie is the impetus in showing Ted that George has been a great thing in his life, and Drew nails that part. She is not only one of my favorite actors, but she has such a great exuberance and spirit to play this character.”

Barrymore was no stranger to voice-over work. Lauded for her voice performances in *Titan A.E.* and new Christmas classic *Olive, The Other Reindeer*, the seasoned actor admits she “tries to project the people I’m speaking for and the emotions that I think my character is feeling” to the audience. “When you’re doing voice-over

work, you tend to enunciate and project your emotions and voice more. With live action, you tend to be a bit more subtle, more internal.”

For the part of Bloomsberry, the senior curator, O’Callaghan had no problem figuring out who should take the role: Dick Van Dyke. “When we started creating the character, Dick just jumped in my head as this legendary actor, someone who has wonderful charisma and appeal—a terrific voice and passion for animation and family entertainment. We needed an actor in the range of the character who could act feeble, but could also have tremendous energy.”

Van Dyke was happy to oblige. The actor has been a family favorite since his days as the unforgettable chimney sweep of *Mary Poppins*. “I love any kind of animation,” he comments. “This film reminds me of the classic animated movies, and I’m just glad that real animation is still alive. You can’t match the emotion of it.”

The producers and director topped off the all-star cast with a few surprises. David Cross would be cast to voice the devious Bloomsberry, Jr. With his acerbic wit and sharp timing, Cross knew he could bring life to Ted’s nemesis at the museum. Eugene Levy shares his unmistakable voice for the wacky inventor Clovis, who helps Ted and George get out of the stickiest situations. Finally, British actor Joan Plowright would agree to voice the dotty diva, Miss Plushbottom, who finds herself the unsuspecting subject of George’s art project when he “redecorates” her penthouse.

The hard work was worth it. All the actors involved remained curious about one thing: how would their animated selves be represented on screen? Voice acting to a script is one thing, but they all express excitement about seeing the finished project. Ferrell sums up their enthusiasm: “Curiosity is that built-in mechanism we have for learning how we are going to exist. Without it, we stop growing. It fuels our lives.”

Animators Work Their Magic:
Designing *Curious George*

*“It’s an animator’s dream to create a character in pantomime where
you don’t have the aid of dialogue...
but solely your pencil and expressions to carry the feel of the scene.”*

—Director Matthew O’Callaghan

Having decided on traditional 2-D animation for *Curious George*, now came the question of who would create the animation. Universal has only been sporadically involved in animated films over the years, the last being 1995’s *Balto*, but the studio has never had an in-house animation unit. Other studios that were known for their animated projects had abandoned traditional animation in favor of CGI and dismantled their in-house animation teams. With few 2-D animated films being produced, there was a surplus of unemployed animators eager for the opportunity to practice their craft. The studio put together an ad hoc animation team for the film, made up of some of the very best freelance animators in the business.

With the key production players in place, it was time to animate the monkey for movie lovers across the world. It would assuredly be dictated by the beautiful artwork and spirit of H.A. and Margret’s work, and Ron Howard knew they couldn’t go wrong with this plan. Howard lauds, “The degree of passion and care coming from the art department in support of this movie is really like nothing I’ve ever seen before. There is so much passion and focus put into getting the color pallet just right—expanding it just enough to make it work for a movie audience—but never veering too much from that wonderful feeling that you get from looking at a *Curious George* book.”

Kirschner agrees. “I feel like the artwork of the film has fallen off the pages of a *Curious George* book. Any animator knows it is unbelievably tough to capture the images with simple lines and keep the story compelling. It looks so simple, but to keep that line work consistent for 80 minutes is impossibly tasking. All of us set out to create a world inspired by the Reys’ invention. I feel we have gone far beyond its original scope with this film.”

“A lot of George’s personality was conveyed through gesture in the illustrations,” shares Rey historian Borden. “And the children reading *Curious George* sometimes can’t read words yet. But they can look at those illustrations and understand how George is feeling—his happiness and curiosity—through his facial expressions.”

Referring to the nonverbal George, director O’Callaghan adds, “It’s an animator’s dream to create a character in pantomime where you don’t have the aid of dialogue...but solely your pencil and expressions to carry the feel of the scene.”

O’Callaghan recalls, “At the same time we nailed our script down, we developed the style of the film—what the film is going to look like—using the books for a guide or reference point on how to style buildings and color.”

The director’s right hand, production designer Yarrow Cheney, would re-create this rich and beautiful world with the Rey style guide of primary colors as his pallet. Cheney refused to even use purple, as that color was never introduced in the Reys’ series. The storyboard department would tell the story by Kaufman and Werb frame by frame in single images, drawn in black and white by animators. The layout department would next design the close-ups and the wide shots and backgrounds behind the characters. Then the background department would take these drawings and paint the beautiful colors, shadows, water, etc.

O’Callaghan notes of the process, “We illustrate the film in single images, since we have to draw every frame. We’re very selective about what we draw as a close-up, what we draw as a wide shot. All of that is mapped out ahead of time before work is done.” This happens while a parallel team works simultaneously on each character of the film...to ultimately place on top of the created backgrounds.

Only a few animators worked on each of the characters, from George to Ted, Maggie and the supporting cast. This specialization allowed mannerisms and affectations of the characters to remain consistent. O’Callaghan notes, “We funnel these drawings through our clean-up department to make sure that Ted always looks like Ted and George always look like George.” Little by little, the black-and-white movie turns into a color film with sound carefully laid on top of the animation.

Barrymore was particularly thrilled to see her beloved George drawn so lovingly by the animators. “Because of my love for *Curious George* and the immense following

that it has, I feel like it's a really wonderful honor to this story and the art of it that we all loved for the past 60 years, they're keeping this film in a 2-D format," the actor notes. "In the technological world we live in, we don't have that sort of warm, old-school feeling a lot, and so it's just a real treasure when it does happen."

The Music of Jack Johnson

"I like to think I'm the monkey himself. I'm his voice, in a way, since he can't speak. I'm writing songs that explain what's in his head."

—Jack Johnson

With a monkey who could only chatter, the filmmakers quickly realized that the audience needed to hear the soundtrack in George's head. What a find it was for the production team to realize that celebrated recording artist Jack Johnson was also a huge *Curious George* fan. Much like George, they knew Johnson has a rare appeal to children, teens and adults alike.

Johnson, a multi-platinum artist, realized behaving like a monkey wasn't out of his repertoire when he was asked to come on board. "I like to think I'm the monkey himself. I'm his voice, in a way, since he can't speak. I'm writing songs that explain what's in his head."

Director O'Callaghan shares, "Because George doesn't speak, he just makes his little monkey sounds and expressions, we need him to be curious and expressive. The Jack Johnson song that we introduce George with is called 'Upside Down' [the first single to be released from the film's soundtrack]. It's very energetic, and Jack is a terrific artist. He really brings the soul of George out onto the screen. He has the ability to lay music that sucks you into that feel; it doesn't overwhelm George, but it taps into his character in a perfect way."

Universal Pictures' president of film music, Kathy Nelson, offers validation for the selection of Johnson. "As luck would have it, Jack just had a baby, and he adores *Curious George*," she notes. "So it was sort of a freaky coincidence, but he completely embraced the idea of it." Just like with *Curious George*, "If you go to a Jack Johnson

concert you'll see everybody ranging from every age—the parents, the teenagers, the kids, the infants.”

Johnson would watch the scenes from the movie pre-paint to get inspiration for the songs he wrote for the film and its album, “Jack Johnson and Friends: Sing-A-Longs and Lullabies for the Film *Curious George*.” He thinks, “George is basically like a kid in his terrible twos—he doesn’t have bad intentions, he just gets himself into a lot of trouble by being curious.”

With a son of his own who just turned two, Johnson can relate to George’s need to touch and feel his universe. “I’ll show my kid one thing one day, then I’ll see him doing it by himself in the corner the next day.” The musician feels, “There couldn’t be a more perfect time than when you’re just sitting around playing songs for your kid. Even though George is in a little monkey body, there’s really no difference between him and a little kid. I think the neat opportunity in this movie is to try and sing songs that kids will get something out of...and somehow hopefully grow into better people because of them.”

Universal Pictures and Imagine Entertainment present A David Kirschner-Jon Shapiro Production: *Curious George*, starring Will Ferrell, Drew Barrymore, David Cross, Eugene Levy, Joan Plowright, Dick Van Dyke. Original songs for the film are by Jack Johnson; music is by Heitor Pereira. The editor for *Curious George* is Julie Rogers; the production designer is Yarrow Cheney. Executive producers of the film are Bonne Radford, Ken Tsumura, James Whitaker, David Bernardi. The film is based on the books by Margret and H.A. Rey. *Curious George* is produced by Ron Howard, David Kirschner, Jon Shapiro. The film is from a story by Ken Kaufman and Mike Werb and a screenplay by Ken Kaufman. *Curious George* is directed by Matthew O’Callaghan.

ABOUT THE CAST

WILL FERRELL (Ted, The Man with the Yellow Hat) completed his seventh and final season on the legendary NBC late-night hit *Saturday Night Live* in 2002, having taken the nation by storm during “Indecision 2000” by impersonating President George W. Bush on the show. Some of his most memorable *SNL* characters include Craig the

Spartan Cheerleader, the musical middle school teacher Marty Culp, and Tom Wilkins, the hyperactive co-host of *Morning Latte*. Among his many impressions are Janet Reno, Alex Trebek, Neil Diamond and the late, great Chicago Cubs sportscaster Harry Caray. His work on *SNL* garnered him two prestigious Emmy Award nominations in 2001—for Outstanding Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program and for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program.

In the feature film world, Ferrell helped bring in big numbers for *Old School* for DreamWorks Pictures and *Road Trip* for director Todd Phillips. *Old School* follows three men who are dissatisfied with their lives. In an effort to recapture the youthful feelings of their college days, they move into a large house together near their old college campus that quickly becomes the hub of the campus party activity. Ferrell starred opposite Vince Vaughn and Luke Wilson.

Ferrell opened his first lead feature, *Elf* (for New Line Cinema and director Jon Favreau), at number one for two weekends in a row. The film ranked as the seventh highest grossing film of 2003, with current worldwide box office earnings at over \$218 million. In the film, he plays a man who is raised from infancy as an elf after accidentally falling into Santa's gift sack during Christmas and stars alongside Bob Newhart, James Caan, Zooey Deschanel and Edward Asner as Santa Claus.

In the summer of 2004, Ferrell starred in the comedy *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* for DreamWorks Pictures, which grossed over \$85 million domestically. Ferrell co-wrote the script with *SNL* writer Adam McKay. Judd Apatow (*Freaks and Geeks*) produced, with David O. Russell (*Three Kings*) executive producing. Ferrell portrayed Ron Burgundy, a 1970s anchorman with an inflated ego who becomes threatened by the arrival of an ambitious female newscaster who, unlike Burgundy, has mastered journalism.

In March 2005, Ferrell starred in the Woody Allen feature *Melinda and Melinda*, as part of an ensemble cast including Josh Brolin, Brooke Smith, Amanda Peet, Zak Orth, Wallace Shawn, Chloë Sevigny, Jonny Lee Miller, Radha Mitchell, Gene Saks and Vinessa Shaw for Fox Searchlight.

Next Ferrell was seen in the May 2005 comedy *Kicking & Screaming* for Universal Pictures. In the film he played a man who coaches his young son's soccer

team. The film follows him as he and his team are pitted against his father's (Robert Duvall) and its star player—his son from a new marriage. He also starred in 2005's summer feature-length remake of the television series *Bewitched*, with Nicole Kidman.

At the beginning of 2006, Ferrell will be seen in the drama *Winter Passing* with Ed Harris, Zooey Deschanel and Amelia Warner. The film tells the story of a young woman who returns to her estranged father's home to discover that a strange cast of characters has moved in.

Ferrell was recently nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor for his work as Franz Liebkind, the pigeon-loving Nazi playwright in Universal Pictures and Columbia Pictures' *The Producers*, directed by Susan Stroman. The film is currently in theaters.

Ferrell has co-starred in two ensemble comedies. In the fashion-world-themed *Zoolander*, he starred opposite Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson—playing Mugatu, an over-the-top fashion designer. In Dimension Films' Kevin Smith-helmed, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* he played an ambitious park ranger. In 2000, Ferrell graced the big screen in the Paramount Pictures/SNL feature *The Ladies Man* starring *SNL* castmate Tim Meadows. Prior to *The Ladies Man*, he starred in *Superstar* for Paramount opposite another *SNL* castmate, Molly Shannon; the TriStar/Phoenix Pictures Nixon parody *Dick*; and in the Paramount comedy *A Night at the Roxbury*, which he co-wrote with castmate Chris Kattan and Steve Koren. Ferrell debuted as a feature film star in the Jay Roach hit *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*.

Raised in Irvine, California, Ferrell attended the University of Southern California and graduated with a degree in sports information. Upon graduation, he worked as a sportscaster on a weekly show broadcast over a local cable channel. Soon after, he enrolled in acting classes and stand-up comedy workshops at a nearby community college. Ultimately, he was asked to join the esteemed comedy/improv group The Groundlings after just one year of training. It was at The Groundlings that Ferrell was discovered for *Saturday Night Live*.

DREW BARRYMORE (Maggie), a successful actress since her feature film debut in *Altered States* at the age of 3, has been captivating moviegoing audiences for

more than two decades. Her unique talent and on-screen charisma have earned her critical acclaim and her movies box-office success. Through her decade-old production company, Flower Films, she has produced an impressive array of films with business partner and friend Nancy Juvonen; from edgier fare such as *Donnie Darko* to major studio releases like the *Charlie's Angels* films, which, to date, have grossed over half a billion dollars worldwide.

Most recently, Barrymore wrapped production on the Warner Bros. drama *Lucky You*, opposite Eric Bana and directed by Curtis Hanson. *Lucky You* is the story of a professional poker player (Bana) who gets a lesson in life from a struggling singer (Barrymore) as he collides with his estranged father at the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas.

In 2005, Drew starred in the critically acclaimed Farrelly brothers' romantic comedy *Fever Pitch*, with co-star Jimmy Fallon, produced by Flower Films for Fox 2000.

Barrymore starred opposite Adam Sandler in the smash-hit romantic comedy *50 First Dates* in 2004—a Flower Films and Happy Madison co-production—which to date has grossed almost \$200 million worldwide. 2004 also brought Barrymore's directorial debut with *The Best Place to Start*, a documentary she also executive produced, about the importance of youth voting, which aired on MTV.

In the summer of 2003, with Flower Films partner Nancy Juvonen, Drew produced and starred with Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu in *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*, the sly and sexy sequel to the blockbuster action-adventure-comedy hit *Charlie's Angels*.

In December 2002, she was seen in *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* for director George Clooney and in a cameo role in the cult classic *Donnie Darko*. The latter film starred Jake Gyllenhaal and Jena Malone and received three Independent Spirit Award nominations.

Prior to that, Barrymore starred in *Riding in Cars with Boys*, directed by Penny Marshall. Her 30th film was the romantic comedy *Never Been Kissed* directed by Raja Gosnell, which marked the first production for Flower Films. The movie grossed \$85 million worldwide and featured a stellar ensemble cast including David Arquette, Molly Shannon, John C. Reilly and Michael Vartan.

Barrymore also starred with Anjelica Huston in the hit *Ever After* for director Andy Tennant. The film has grossed over \$100 million worldwide and was an instant sell-out on home video. She also appeared in the quirky romantic comedy *Home Fries* for director Dean Parisot.

Drew starred in Woody Allen's highly successful ensemble *Everyone Says I Love You*, which featured Edward Norton, Tim Roth, Alan Alda, Julia Roberts and Goldie Hawn; and then in the box-office hit *Scream*, directed by Wes Craven and featuring Courteney Cox, Neve Campbell and Skeet Ulrich.

Other previous films included starring roles in *Guncrazy*, for which she earned her second Golden Globe nomination, *Poison Ivy*, *Bad Girls*, *Boys on the Side*, *Mad Love* and *Batman Forever*.

Barrymore made her feature film debut in the 1980 film *Altered States* with William Hurt. Her next film was *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, where her portrayal of Gertie earned her a Youth in Film Award and a BAFTA (British Academy of Film & Television Arts) Award nomination for Most Outstanding Newcomer. She went on to star in such films as Stephen King's *Firestarter*, *Irreconcilable Differences* (for which she received her first Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actress) and Stephen King's *Cat's Eye*, written especially for her, in which she played five different roles.

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, **DAVID CROSS** (Bloomsberry, Jr.) made his way to Boston to study film at Emerson College, but quickly dropped out and started doing stand-up full time. He moved to Los Angeles to write for *The Ben Stiller Show*, where he shared the Emmy (given after the show was canceled) with the show's other writers.

Continuing in the sketch tradition, he created (along with Bob Odenkirk) the groundbreaking show for HBO, *Mr. Show with Bob and David*. The show ran for four years and garnered several Emmy nominations. He has also released two comedy CDs on the Subpop label, *Shut Up You F***ing Baby* and *It's Not Funny*. *Shut Up....* was nominated for a Grammy Award. Both continue to sell exceptionally well and have garnered rave reviews.

Cross has appeared in such films as *Men in Black* (both I and II), *Waiting for Guffman*, *Scary Movie 2*, *Ghost World* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Upcoming features include *She's the Man* for DreamWorks and *School for Scoundrels* for the Weinstein Company.

Cross is currently appearing in the Emmy Award-winning Fox Network comedy, *Arrested Development* as Tobias Fünke. Currently, he divides his time between New York and Los Angeles.

EUGENE LEVY (Clovis), the uproarious Second City alum, has been a favorite of film and television audiences for more than 30 years. As a writer, director and much-respected comedian, Levy has developed a following that has cemented him as a cult-comedy icon.

In the mid-'70s, after two years as a part of the celebrated Second City comedy troupe, Levy, along with fellow troupe members John Candy and Joe Flaherty, made a move from Toronto to California to try his luck in the United States. Their idea for a television series about a low-budget television station blossomed into *Second City TV*. While the show, ironically, brought Levy and his friends back to Toronto, it also became a solid hit in Canada and developed a loyal cult following in the U.S. After *SCTV*'s initial run ended in 1981, NBC brought the show back in an extended version titled *SCTV Network 90*, which ran until 1983. In addition to being one of the program's most favored players, Levy won two Emmy awards as a member of the show's writing staff.

By the late '80s, Levy's career was continuing on its path to success. In 1989, he began working behind the camera again, directing a special for his old partner Martin Short. And in 1992, he made his feature directorial debut with the John Candy/Jim Belushi comedy *Once Upon A Crime*. In 1996, Levy scored a bigger breakthrough when he and Christopher Guest began writing a screenplay for a mockumentary about a small town theater troupe. *Waiting For Guffman* became a hit and gave Levy a meaty comic role as stage-struck dentist Allan Pearl. In 1999, the actor had another high-profile success with the blockbuster hit *American Pie*, in which he played the understanding but terminally non-hip father of hormonally charged teenager Jim (Jason Biggs). Levy

reprised the role in the 2001 sequel *American Pie 2* and again in 2003's *American Wedding*.

In 2000, Levy and Guest teamed up again for the hit comedy *Best in Show*, for which the two received a Best Screenplay nomination from the Writers Guild of America. He and Guest went on to co-write and star in the hysterical 2003 mockumentary *A Mighty Wind*, a parody about '60s folk musicians who reunite for a tribute concert several years after their heyday.

Levy next starred in the Disney hit comedy *Bringing Down the House*, alongside Steve Martin and Queen Latifah, followed by New Line Cinema's *The Man* with Samuel L. Jackson. Levy most recently appeared opposite Steve Martin in 20th Century Fox's *Cheaper by the Dozen 2* and will lend his voice to the upcoming animated feature *Over the Hedge* for Dreamworks SKG.

Levy resides with his family in both Los Angeles and Toronto.

Long considered one of Britain's finest stage actresses, it wasn't until the 1980s that **JOAN PLOWRIGHT** (Miss Plushbottom) came into her own as a character actress in films. She trained at the Old Vic Theatre School and made her stage debut in 1951, later appearing in such groundbreaking productions as John Osborne's *The Entertainer* and Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. She received acclaim for her title roles in *Major Barbara* and *Saint Joan* and won a Tony for her Broadway performance in *A Taste of Honey*.

She made her film debut in *Moby Dick* (1956), but received more attention when she re-created her stage role in the film adaptation of *The Entertainer* (1960), playing the daughter of Laurence Olivier, whom she married in 1961. She remained married to Olivier until his death in 1989. While raising a family, she worked only sporadically, in films like *Three Sisters* (1970, directed by Olivier) and *Equus* (1977). Her output increased in the 1980s: *Brimstone & Treacle*, *Britannia Hospital* (both 1982), *Wagner* (1983) and *Revolution* (1985).

She was excellent in starring roles in *Drowning by Numbers* (1987) and *The Dressmaker* (1988), then demonstrated her extraordinary range—and ability with accents—in the American films *I Love You to Death* (1990, as Tracey Ullman's

Yugoslavian mother) and *Avalon* (1990, as Aidan Quinn's Jewish mother). She was wonderful in an Oscar®-nominated performance as an uptight Victorian widow in *Enchanted April* (1992), costarred in the television movie *Stalin* (1992) and played Mrs. Wilson in John Hughes' adaptation of *Dennis the Menace* (1993). She costarred in the television movie *The Summer House* (also 1993) and appeared in *Widows' Peak* (1994).

In 1993's *Last Action Hero*, she made a cameo appearance as a schoolteacher gamely trying to interest her pupils in Shakespeare by showing them a film clip of Olivier's performance in 1948's *Hamlet*. Her recent credits include: Mrs. Arness in *Bringing Down the House*, the comedy starring Steve Martin; Mary Wallace in *Tea with Mussolini*; and Mrs. Palfrey in *Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont*.

DICK VAN DYKE (Mr. Bloomsberry) was born in West Plains, Missouri, in 1925 and was then raised in Danville, Illinois. As a young boy he spent a lot of time alone teaching himself music, magic and pantomime. He was a baritone, and he appeared in school plays, ran track, served as junior class president and worked part time on a local radio station.

Van Dyke joined the Air Force at 18 and was quickly recruited for a radio show called *Flight Time*. After a year of duty in the States, he went back to Danville and worked briefly in advertising, then, in 1946, he joined another local entertainer, Phil Erickson, in a record-pantomime act called *The Merry Mutes*. During a lengthy run of appearances in Los Angeles, Van Dyke sent for his Danville girlfriend, Marjorie Willet, and the two were married on the radio station's program *Bride and Groom*.

In 1955, Van Dyke went from radio to television, as host of *The CBS Morning Show*, where Walter Cronkite served as news anchor, Barbara Walters wrote news copy and Merv Griffin provided the music. By 1958, after trying other formats including a kids' show, a talk show, a game show and a pilot, Van Dyke was released by CBS. He soon landed a spot in the revue called *The Boys Against the Girls*. From there, he starred opposite Chita Rivera in *Bye Bye Birdie*, in which Van Dyke introduced "Put on a Happy Face" and won a 1960 Tony Award.

While performing in *Bye Bye Birdie*, Van Dyke was invited to read scripts for Sheldon Leonard and Carl Reiner for an untitled series. That led to *The Dick Van Dyke*

Show, which premiered in 1961 and still enjoys worldwide syndication. In five seasons, Van Dyke won three Emmy awards.

While on periodic hiatus, Van Dyke starred in many feature-length films, including the film version of *Bye-Bye Birdie* (1963) and the Disney classic *Mary Poppins* (1964). Other features included *Lt. Robinson Crusoe, U.S.N.* (1966), *Divorce American Style* (1967), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), *The Comic* (1969), *Some Kind of a Nut* (1969), *Cold Turkey* (1971) and *The Runner Stumbles* (1979). *The Dick Van Dyke Show* left the air while it was on top after five seasons.

Dick's next project was a dramatic television movie, *The Morning After*, adapted from Jack Weiner's novel about a talented and successful family man whose life was destroyed by alcoholism. With its unrelenting theme and downbeat ending, the film broke ground for television dramas and earned Van Dyke an Emmy nomination.

Then Van Dyke went back to song, dance and comedy, starring in 13 *Van Dyke and Company* variety specials. In 1979, he was back in theater touring as Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, before taking it to Broadway. The following year, he toured in *Damn Yankees*.

Van Dyke won his fifth Emmy for the 1982 CBS Library Special *Wrong Way Kid*. Other TV movies included *Drop-Out Father; Found Money*, with Sid Caesar; the PBS special *Breakfast with Les and Bess*, with Cloris Leachman; the miniseries *Strong Medicine*; and a Showtime production of *The Country Girl*, with Faye Dunaway.

Van Dyke has been honored with many awards, including the Dace Legend of the Year award from the Professional Dancers Society of America, the 1998 Disney Legend Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Comedy Awards and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (1993). *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was inducted into the Producers Guild Hall of Fame, and in 1995, Van Dyke was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame.

Mark Sloan, the crime-solving MD, was introduced in an episode of *Jake and the Fat Man* before becoming the central figure in several TV movies and the series *Diagnosis Murder*, which ran on CBS for eight seasons through the 1990s until 2001, followed by two additional Dr. Sloan movies in 2002. The series is now syndicated worldwide.

In 2003, nearly 40 years after *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore reunited to play two lonely retirees in D.L. Coburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *The Gin Game* on PBS Hollywood Theater. They were together again the following year as Rob and Laura Petrie in *The Dick Van Dyke Show Revisited*.

Divorced in 1984, Van Dyke has two sons, two daughters, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He and the former Michelle Triola live in Malibu.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MATTHEW O'CALLAGHAN (Directed by) was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. After attending the Character Animation program at California Institute of the Arts, he was hired by Disney. While there, he worked as an assistant animator, storyboard artist and ultimately became a supervising animator.

O'Callaghan's Disney animation credits include *The Little Mermaid*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *The Great Mouse Detective* and *Mickey's Christmas Carol*. Outside of Disney, he also worked on *The Pagemaster*, *Cats Don't Dance* and *Rover Dangerfield*.

O'Callaghan went on to direct the theatrical animated short *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*, starring Jim Carrey, which he later developed into a television series for Paramount. He then teamed up with comedian Louie Anderson and created the award-winning series, *Life with Louie* for Fox. On both series he served as creator, executive producer, director, writer, story editor and character designer. Later, O'Callaghan worked as a computer animation supervisor on such Disney films as *102 Dalmatians*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Snow Dogs* and Touchstone's *Mission to Mars*.

O'Callaghan's experience with quality character animation combined with computer graphics led him to create and direct the first Mickey Mouse CG test for Disney. The 30-second test was so well received that he was given his next assignment, directing the all-CG feature-length *Mickey's Twice Upon A Christmas*. This project not only showcased the first CG Mickey, but featured the classic characters Donald Duck, Goofy, Minnie and Pluto, too.

O'Callaghan resides in Valencia, California with his wife and three children.

Born and raised in New York, **KEN KAUFMAN** (Screenplay and Story by) graduated from Columbia University with a degree in architecture. Ken worked for many years as an illustrator designing album covers. He soon took up screenwriting after moving to Los Angeles and has written *The Missing*, directed by Ron Howard, *Space Cowboys*, directed by Clint Eastwood, and *Muppets From Space*. Ken lives in Topanga Canyon and Paris with his wife Judi and daughter Lulu.

MIKE WERB (Story by) will always be grateful to Imagine Entertainment, Brian Grazer, Devorah Moos-Hankin, Jon Shapiro and David Kirschner for hiring him as the first writer to adapt the wonderful and enduring *Curious George* series for the screen. He had the additional honor of discussing the adaptation with H.A. Rey's widow and co-author Margret Rey.

He quickly followed this assignment with his first produced box-office success: writing the screenplay for the international hit comedy *The Mask*, starring Jim Carrey and Cameron Diaz.

Partnering with Michael Colleary, Werb co-wrote and co-produced the Oscar®-nominated thriller *Face/Off* starring John Travolta and Nicolas Cage. Dubbed "the strangest story ever to get a green light at a Hollywood studio" by *The Wall Street Journal*, and named "one of the 1,000 best films of all time" by *The New York Times*, *Face/Off* won the best screenplay statuette at the 24th annual Saturn Awards.

Recent credits include *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, starring Angelina Jolie, and the WB's splashy flop series *Tarzan*, starring Travis Fimmel's abs. Werb and Colleary also worked intimately with California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in his last starring role, *Collateral Damage*.

Active projects include a film adaptation of the best-selling arena-fighting video game *Tekken* for Crystal Sky Pictures/Screen Gems; *The Divide* for John Woo/Pandemonium; *Prophets of the Ghost Ants*, in partnership with Lawrence Bender and A Band Apart; and *Tomorrow/Today*, a futuristic drama series for Bonnie Curtis and DreamWorks Television/NBC.

Writer/producer Werb has just completed principal photography on *Firehouse Dog*, an action-comedy for director Todd Holland and Regency Enterprises/Fox (fall

2006). He is a graduate of Stanford University and UCLA, and is a member of the Writers Guild of America and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Academy Award®-winning filmmaker **RON HOWARD** (Produced by) is one of this generation's most popular directors. From the critically acclaimed dramas *A Beautiful Mind* and *Apollo 13* to the hit comedies *Parenthood* and *Splash*, he has created some of Hollywood's most memorable films. Most recently, he directed and produced *Cinderella Man* starring Russell Crowe, with whom he previously collaborated on *A Beautiful Mind*, for which Howard earned an Oscar® for Best Director and which also won awards for Best Picture, Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actress. The film garnered four Golden Globes as well, including the award for Best Motion Picture Drama. Additionally, Howard won Best Director of the Year from the Directors Guild of America. Howard and producer Brian Grazer received the first annual Awareness Award from the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign for their work on the film.

Howard's skill as a director has long been recognized. In 1995, he received his first Best Director of the Year award from the DGA for *Apollo 13*. The true-life drama also garnered nine Academy Award® nominations, winning Oscars® for Best Film Editing and Best Sound. It also received Best Ensemble Cast and Best Supporting Actor awards from the Screen Actor's Guild. Many of Howard's past films have received nods from the Academy, including the popular hits *Backdraft*, *Parenthood* and *Cocoon*, the last of which took home two Oscars®. On December 4, 2005, Howard was honored by the Museum of Moving Images.

Howard's portfolio includes some of the most popular films of the past 20 years. In 1991, Howard created the acclaimed drama *Backdraft*, starring Robert De Niro, Kurt Russell and William Baldwin. He followed it with the historical epic *Far and Away*, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Howard directed Mel Gibson, Rene Russo, Gary Sinise and Delroy Lindo in the 1996 suspense thriller *Ransom*. Howard worked with Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Ed Harris, Bill Paxton, Gary Sinise and Kathleen Quinlan on *Apollo 13*, which was re-released recently in the IMAX format. Howard's other films include the blockbuster *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, starring Jim Carrey; *Parenthood*, starring Steve Martin; the fantasy epic *Willow*; and *Night Shift*,

starring Henry Winkler, Michael Keaton and Shelley Long; and the suspenseful western *The Missing*, starring Oscar® winners Cate Blanchett and Tommy Lee Jones.

Howard is currently directing the big-screen adaptation of the international bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*, starring Oscar® winner Tom Hanks, Audrey Tautou, Sir Ian McKellen, Alfred Molina, Jean Reno and Paul Bettany.

Howard has also served as an executive producer on a number of award-winning films and television shows, such as the HBO miniseries *From the Earth to the Moon*, and Fox's Emmy award winner for Best Comedy, *Arrested Development*, for which he also narrates.

Howard and long-time producing partner Brian Grazer first collaborated on the hit comedies *Night Shift* and *Splash*. The pair co-founded Imagine Entertainment in 1986 to create independently produced feature films. The company has since produced a variety of popular feature films, including such hits as *The Nutty Professor*, *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*, *Bowfinger*, *The Paper*, *Inventing the Abbotts* and *Liar Liar*. Howard made his directorial debut in 1978 with the comedy *Grand Theft Auto*.

He began his career in film as an actor. He first appeared in *The Journey* and *The Music Man*, then as Opie on the long-running television series *The Andy Griffith Show*. Howard later starred in the popular series *Happy Days* and drew favorable reviews for his performances in *American Graffiti* and *The Shootist*.

DAVID KIRSCHNER (Produced by) Productions maintains an eclectic slate of projects, focusing primarily on family and genre films. In Fall 2003, New Line released their successful family film, *Secondhand Lions*, into theaters. The film stars Oscar® winners Michael Caine and Robert Duvall, and Oscar® nominee Haley Joel Osment, and was written and directed by Tim McCanlies (*Iron Giant*). In July 2005, Kirschner wrapped production on a second film for New Line called *Martian Child*. This comedy-drama is based on the Hugo and Nebula Award-winning short story by sci-fi luminary David Gerrold (*Star Trek*'s classic "The Trouble with Tribbles" episode). John Cusack stars in the film alongside Oscar® winner Anjelica Huston, Oscar® nominees Joan Cusack, Sophie Okonedo and Amanda Peet. The film was directed by Menno Meyjes,

writer/director of 2004's acclaimed *Max* for Lions Gate, and Oscar®-nominated screenwriter of *The Color Purple*, as well as the Denzel Washington starrer *The Siege*.

This year Kirschner and producing partner Corey Sienega will team up with Mike Medavoy to produce the biography of famed children's author and illustrator Beatrix Potter (*The Tale of Peter Rabbit*). Starring Oscar® winner Renée Zellweger and Ewan McGregor, the magical romance-drama was written by Tony Award winner Richard Maltby, Jr. (*Miss Saigon, Ain't Misbehavin'*) and will be directed by Chris Noonan (*Babe*).

In 2004, Kirschner produced *Seed of Chucky*, the fifth installment of the successful horror franchise, which opened in theaters in November. Additionally, Kirschner served as executive producer on last summer's 5-hour sci-fi thriller miniseries, *5 Days Til Midnight*. Starring Oscar® winner Timothy Hutton, this television event aired last June on the Sci-Fi Channel.

In 2001, Kirschner produced Lions Gate's critically acclaimed thriller *Frailty*. Directed by Bill Paxton, who also starred alongside Matthew McConaughey, the film was lauded by the National Board of Review that year for Excellence in Filmmaking.

A native of suburban Los Angeles, Kirschner began his career as an illustrator for Jim Henson's Muppet and Sesame Street characters. At 23, he wrote and illustrated a series of children's books titled *Rose Petal Place*. This property spawned a total of 16 books, two television specials and over 1,100 different products.

In 1986, Kirschner created and executive produced with Steven Spielberg the smash hit *An American Tail*, which became one of the most successful animated films in history. This film was followed by the sequel *An American Tail 2: Fievel Goes West*, a Saturday-morning animated series, and direct-to-video features *American Tails 3, 4* and *5*. Kirschner's second feature film was the horror hit *Child's Play*, whose leading character, Chucky, an animatronic doll which Kirschner created, became a cult star and spawned a second successful franchise with *Child's Play 2, Child's Play 3* and the 1998 box-office winner, *Bride of Chucky*, starring Jennifer Tilly. *Seed of Chucky*, the hit horror comedy and fifth installment in the popular *Child's Play* franchise, opened in theaters in November 2004.

Kirschner's next production, Disney's hit comedy-thriller *Hocus Pocus*, was based on his short story and starred Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy.

Kirschner also created and produced NBC's Emmy-nominated *The Dreamer of Oz*. Starring John Ritter, the television event was based on the life of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* creator L. Frank Baum. Kirschner also produced the Emmy Award-winning *The Halloween Tree*, written and narrated by Ray Bradbury. Kirschner later served as executive producer of Gene Roddenberry's *Earth: Final Conflict*. A two-time Emmy nominee over its five-year run, *Earth* recently sold into second run syndication and now can be seen on the Sci-Fi Channel.

On the theatrical side, Kirschner executive produced the box-office smash *The Flintstones*, again in partnership with Spielberg. He then co-wrote and produced the Twentieth Century Fox/Turner live-action and animated fantasy *The Pagemaster*. This film was based upon the book co-written by Kirschner which was named the American Library Association's "Children's Book of the Year."

Kirschner also produced the critically acclaimed animated feature *Cats Don't Dance*, released by Warner Bros. in the spring of 1997. *Cats* won both the Golden Crown at Annecy and the prestigious Annie Award (the American Animation Awards) for Best Feature, beating out Disney's *Hercules* and Warner Bros.' *Space Jam*. In summer 2000, Twentieth Century Fox released *Titan A.E.*, a space adventure loosely based on the Robert Louis Stevenson classic *Treasure Island* which was also produced by Kirschner.

JON SHAPIRO's (Produced by) involvement as producer of *Curious George* can be traced back several decades to the evenings as a youngster when his parents would read the beloved original stories to his brothers and him at bedtime. Years later during a trip to his boyhood home for Thanksgiving, Jon was rummaging through his collection of childhood books when he came upon his well-worn but still intact copy of *Curious George*.

He instantaneously recognized that his love for the characters of George and The Man with the Yellow Hat hadn't diminished a bit, and that perhaps there were many others in the world who also maintained a similar affinity, not to mention the legions of

fans who had read the books since. As a Hollywood-based producer, Jon's instinct for finding good material for entertainment franchises kicked into high gear, and thus was started a multi-year quest to bring *Curious George* to the movies, TV and consumer products for old and new fans to enjoy his incredible adventures in new ways.

With the blessing of co-author Margret Rey, Jon assembled the most accomplished and passionate team of partners he could find to help ensure that this beloved literary classic would make a successful transition. With producers David Kirschner, Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, as well as Universal Pictures on board, it became their mutual goal to live up to the lofty expectations held by generations of *Curious George* fans from all over the world.

Working from the seven original storybooks, the team commissioned screenplays and brought aboard creative comrades who shared their passion for *Curious George*. The resulting movie is one that is hoped to bring about excitement and entertainment among all who are curious to see George, The Man with the Yellow Hat and their friends come to life in a magical way.

Shapiro has also been producer of the IMAX concert film, *All Access: Front Row. Backstage. Live!*, starring Carlos Santana, Sting, Sheryl Crow, Dave Matthews Band, B.B. King, Macy Gray, Mary J. Blige and Moby; as well as executive producer of *Richie Rich*, starring Macaulay Culkin; *The Big Brass Ring*, from a screenplay by Orson Welles, starring William Hurt and Nigel Hawthorne; and the Grammy-winning *Rendezvous in New York*, featuring jazz legend Chick Corea. Shapiro's upcoming projects include 3-D films in development with the NFL about the Super Bowl, as well as a concert film starring one of the world's biggest bands.

BONNE RADFORD's (Executive Producer) history in production harks back to the early '80s with her work on Steven Spielberg's masterful epic *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. As a producer, she has worked on such animated fare as *The Road to El Dorado* (2000) and *Balto* (1995). As a production controller, she has handled films that include a laundry list of modern-day masterpieces from *The Color Purple* (1985), *An American Tail* (1986), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *The Land Before Time* (1988) to all three *Back to the Future* films.

KEN TSUMURA (Executive Producer) has more than ten years' experience in feature animation through Universal Pictures, DreamWorks and Columbia Pictures. He previously served as executive producer on *Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights* and produced *The Prince of Egypt*, among other films. Tsumura has been influential in television as well, working on such varied projects as *The Simpsons* and *Father of the Pride*. His live-action short, *Last Stand*, has garnered notice on the festival circuit. In addition, he is an active alumnus in mentorship programs at his alma mater, USC.

JAMES WHITAKER (Executive Producer) was most recently an executive producer on *Flightplan*, starring Jodie Foster and directed by Robert Schwentke. He was also co-executive producer on Ron Howard's film *Cinderella Man*, starring Academy Award® winner Russell Crowe, and executive producer on *Friday Night Lights*, starring Billy Bob Thornton and based on the book by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Buzz Bissinger. Whitaker has also executive produced *8 Mile* and co-produced *Intolerable Cruelty*, *Nutty Professor II* and *Life*.

Whitaker began his career doing craft services on John Waters' *Hairspray*, worked in production as an assistant cameraman, and produced and directed documentary films before attending the Peter Stark Program at USC, where he earned a master's degree in fine arts. He began his career 12 years ago as an intern at Imagine, and in 2004, he was named president of motion picture production. Whitaker earned his BA in economics from Georgetown University.

DAVID BERNARDI (Executive Producer), an Imagine Entertainment senior vice president of motion pictures, joined the Academy Award®-winning production company in 1996, after having worked as an assistant editor for *Flash Art* magazine in New York City and Europe. Bernardi has most recently served as an associate producer on *Friday Night Lights*, a Universal Pictures and Imagine film directed by Peter Berg. After his role as executive producer on *Curious George*, Bernardi will turn his attention to a remake of *Bride of Frankenstein* and a biopic about the life of Hugh Hefner for Universal.

YARROW CHENEY's (Production Designer) career in animation spans the past decade, beginning with his work in visual effects on both *Cats Don't Dance* (1997) and *Quest for Camelot* (1998). Notably, he served as a title designer in 1999 on the television show *Dilbert*, a 3-D computer animator and background designer on *Mummies Alive! The Legend Begins* in 1998 and as a computer graphics animator for *The Iron Giant* in 1999.

Most notably, Cheney served as the production designer on the Academy Award® winner for Best Animated Short Film, *The Chubbchubbs!* (2002)

JULIE ROGERS (Film Editor) previously collaborated with Matthew O'Callaghan on Disney's 2004 release *Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas* and was animation editor on the film *Fat Albert*. She has also worked extensively on live action movies including *Racing Stripes*, starring Dustin Hoffman and Whoopi Goldberg; *Stuart Little*, with Michael J. Fox; and *Trading Favors*, directed by Sondra Locke.

Julie's film career started when she worked as the extras coordinator on the set of Martin Ritt's *Murphy's Romance*. Her editing career began when she apprenticed on Oliver Stone's *Salvador*. She was assistant film editor on a variety of film features including *Graffiti Bridge*, *Cutthroat Island*, *Tombstone* and *Hercules*.

HEITOR PEREIRA (Composer) is establishing a reputation for bringing international flavors to mainstream American scores. From a Santa Monica studio jammed with hundreds of instruments from around the world, Pereira has composed scores for *Ask the Dust*, *Real Women Have Curves*, *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights* and *Riding in Cars with Boys*.

Pereira attracted Hans Zimmer's attention for his outstanding skills as a guitarist. He hired Pereira to play on a few scores, and soon Pereira was following in the footsteps of other well-known musicians turned film composers such as Zimmer, James Newton Howard and Danny Elfman. He played guitar on and/or contributed music to the scores of: *Mission: Impossible II*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Spanglish*, *As Good As It Gets*, *I Am Sam*, *The Pledge*, *Something's Gotta Give*, *Shrek 2*, *Madagascar*, *Man on Fire*, *Spy Kids* and *The Rundown*.

Born to a family of musicians in the south of Brazil, Pereira completed his conservatory studies in guitar, harmony, counterpoint and composition in Rio de Janeiro. He quickly began playing with some of the leading artists in Brazil and attracted the attention of the producer of Simply Red. He entertained millions of fans around the world as that band's lead guitarist and has also released three solo albums of his own music. Throughout his career, Pereira has played guitar on the albums of widely diverse artists who esteem him as much for his unique sensibility as his astonishing guitar virtuosity. These artists include Sergio Mendes, Caetano Veloso, Ivan Lins, Jack Johnson, Bryan Adams, Elton John, Willie Nelson, Shania Twain, Seal and Nelly Furtado.

In the past five years, **JACK JOHNSON** (Original Songs by) has gone from filmmaker—shooting and scoring his 16mm surf films—to a well-known singer-songwriter. After spending the end of 2003 on the road in support of *On and On*, and slowing down in 2004 to welcome his new baby boy, Johnson recently released his third, and most musically upbeat release to date, *In Between Dreams*.

Raised on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, Johnson practically began to surf as he began to walk. As the youngest of three wave-riding brothers and a longboarding father, most of Johnson's life lessons were learned in the water. With Pipeline in his front yard, Johnson started surfing the legendary wave at age 12, at 17 was invited to surf in the Pipe Masters competition, and one month later suffered a surfing accident that kept him out of the water for three months. Although Johnson had begun playing guitar as a young teen, it was these land-locked months that allowed him to hone his guitar skills and find influences in a wide range of musicians from Cat Stevens to Fugazi.

At 18, Johnson left the islands to study filmmaking at the University of California at Santa Barbara. After graduating in 1997, Johnson began a yearlong adventure around the world with old surfing friends Chris and Emmett Malloy. The result was the acclaimed 16mm surf film *Thicker Than Water*, hailed as a return to the purist beauty of early surf cinema, which Johnson co-directed and shot. It was during the scoring of the film that Johnson found his musical voice. Before its release in 1999, Johnson's soulful

folk tunes, inflected with blues and hip-hop flavorings, soon began circulating as bootlegs in all corners of the global surf community.

At this time Johnson met fellow surfer Garrett Dutton (aka G. Love), who recorded Johnson's "Rodeo Clowns" for the G. Love & Special Sauce disc *Philadelphonic*, also released in 1999. The recording quickly gained radio airplay and Johnson's reputation as a musician began to build beyond the surf community. Despite offers to sign a record deal, Johnson chose to escape to the South Pacific to film his second surf film, *The September Sessions*. By this time, *Thicker Than Water* was named *Surfer* magazine's Film of the Year, and its follow-up *The September Sessions* nabbed the Adobe Highlight Award at the ESPN Film Festival. Johnson's bootleg tape fell into the hands of musician Ben Harper and his manager/producer J.P. Plunier, who helped Johnson to make a record.

In January 2001, Johnson's full-length debut, *Brushfire Fairytales* was released on Enjoy Records, an upstart indie label founded by veteran A&R man Andy Factor and Plunier, who produced the recording. *Brushfire Fairytales* was an impressive debut on numerous levels—from the opening "Inaudible Melodies," which seemed to boil Jack's personal philosophy down to a chorus of "Slow down everyone/You're moving too fast," to the anthemic "Flake"—*Brushfire Fairytales* turned many people across the nation onto Johnson. While opening for Ben Harper's four-month U.S./Australian tour in 2001, *Brushfire Fairytales* started to build momentum and spread like wildfire among the enthusiastic, music-minded Harper crowd. By the fall, Johnson, along with drummer Adam Topol and bassist Merlo Podlewski were selling out their own club shows. Within a year of the album's release, it had sold 100,000 copies. In January 2003, it went platinum.

In May 2003, Johnson released his sophomore album *On and On*, which was produced by Mario Caldato, Jr., best known for his work with the Beastie Boys. The album featured the same lineup as *Brushfire Fairytales*: Johnson on vocals/guitar, Topol on drums and Podlewski on bass. *On and On* mixed heartfelt ballads of love and simple joys with more serious subjects of materialism, industrialization, school shootings, offshore oil drilling and war. The inner truth and social commentary that was evident in Johnson's early songwriting on *Brushfire Fairytales* matured with *On and On*.

On and On's release launched Johnson's newly formed Brushfire Records label and garnered sales of one million within its first year. Also during that year Brushfire Records welcomed Johnson's old friends G. Love and Donavon Frankenreiter, a professional surfer/musician, and released the soundtracks for Johnson's surf films *Thicker Than Water* and *The September Sessions*.

On March 1, 2005, Johnson released his third full-length recording, *In Between Dreams*. Johnson, along with Topol and Podlewski, brings acoustic sing-a-longs full of smartly embellished strumming and solid basslines to create the hypnotic, blues and funk-inflected groove flowing through the album. *In Between Dreams* was recorded in Hawaii and Los Angeles and was produced by Mario Caldato, Jr. and engineered by Robert Carranza, the same duo at the controls for 2003's *On and On*. *In Between Dreams* also features contributions from Jack's friend Zach Gill of Animal Liberation Orchestra on piano and accordion.

The songs on *In Between Dreams* are nostalgic and romantic. "Better Together," with its boxes of photographs awash in "sepia-toned lovin'," is a love song Johnson penned for his wife, Kim: "It's not always easy and sometimes life can be deceiving/But I'll tell you one thing, it's always better when we're together." The upbeat "Staple It Together" reminds us to roll with life's punches, while "If I Could," quietly laced with melodica and hand drums, is a heartfelt goodbye to a friend: "I heard some words from a friend on the phone that didn't sound so good/The doctor gave him two weeks to live/I'd give him more, if I could." Some tracks, like the accordion-filled "Belle," predate *Brushfire Fairytales*, while others, like "Crying Shame," were written just as the album was being finished. The first single, "Sitting, Waiting, Wishing," is about a friend's amusing pursuit of a girl.

Having started playing music at his family barbecues and atop boats on far-off surf trips, it must be a touch surreal when Johnson finds himself traveling the world with his band, performing on television shows, and playing to sold-out amphitheatres. But the reality is that Jack Johnson has accomplished an impressive amount over the last few years as an artist, filmmaker, musician and now as a father. His third full-length release, *In Between Dreams*, delivers his signature sound that fans around the world have grown to love, in an upbeat collection of songs that will get everyone to sing along.