

THE BOSS BABY (2017)

- Released by March 31st, 2017
- 1 hour 37 minutes
- \$125 million budget
- Tom McGrath directed
- Rated PG for some mild rude humor
- Arad Productions, DreamWorks, Grosvenor Park Productions
- Produced by Rebecca Huntley, Ramsey Ann Naito, Jed Schluger

QUICK THOUGHTS:

- Marisa Serafini
- Demetri Panos
- Phil Svitek

DEVELOPMENT

- “Development at DreamWorks is great; they acquire really interesting books they think would be fun for an animated project. There was a pile of books and in it was a book by Marla Frazee called *'Boss Baby'*. A baby in a suit? That sounds interesting. It was a really charming book that had a metaphor for when a baby comes into your life and takes over. The writing was really clever and I thought it would be a unique idea for an animation. There was a writer at DreamWorks, Mike McCullers, who had written for *Austin Powers* movies. We both had a similar take – if we told this story through the point of view of an older sibling, we could expand this world. We started playing with the idea that every kid’s worst nightmare is getting all your parents love and someone comes in and takes it. That’s a great theme.” - McGrath
- McGrath said most of the film, which is based on a children’s book, was written in 2012, and most of the animation was completed before Trump became “a serious contender” for president.
- “The challenge was we used to have a release date of 2016, and I remember talking to the studio, and they saw the potential of the movie. They were ‘we don’t want to rush it’. And so they pushed it a year for the benefit of the movie. We realised it was going to be a challenge to do all these fantasy sequences, and to give it the time it needed to be made. I felt really fortunate that we had the release date we had.” - McGrath
- “Tom sent me the script about three and a half years ago, my connection was through being a mother. I have children, and my first son was seven – just like Tim Templeton – when my second son arrived, and he was really jealous. We still live in a house with so much sibling rivalry, and so this story is really relatable to me, because I can only hope that over the course of my children’s lifetimes, they go on a journey just like Tim and Boss Baby to love one another, learn what family is, and so that was my connection.” - Producer Ramsey Ann Naito

WRITING (Michael McCullers, Marla Frazee- Book) (PIC_001_BB_Book)

- When [screenplay adapter] Michael McCullers and I started to develop the story, the theme was the fear of a older sibling not having ‘enough to go around’ when a younger brother comes into the family. That expansion was based on the older brother’s fear, and we thought it would be great that in his imagination there would be these rival companies, PuppyCo versus The Boss Baby. Those two businesses are competing for and quantifying love, and the lesson in the film is that if you give your love away, it comes back to you tenfold.” - McGrath
- “The other feeling was inspired by ‘How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying,’ that kind of 1960s business flair. We rationalized it because during the Baby Boom that was the Boss

Baby's most successful period. We went back to that era to research the look and feel of it, and contrasted it with PuppyCo, which we designed like Hickory Farms on steroids."- McGrath

- "When I read Marla Frazee's book, the story felt really original about this baby in a suit, and it's really about a metaphor for parenting. I have a brother who's close to me who's two years older. I was the boss baby of the family, so for me, connecting with the story and developing a story on a larger landscape – that was the experience I had with my brother and my family. I connected with this story because as my brother and I got older – in high school we were very competitive – we became very, very close. And so in a way for me, it was telling a story that's more of a love letter, in a way." -McGrath

STORY/TOPICS

- Comparisons (Look Who's Talking, Trump)
- The cleverness and imagination vs reality of the world
- Baby Co vs Puppy Co
- Brotherhood
- Parenting

CAST:

ALEC BALDWIN (Boss Baby) (PIC_002_Alec_BossBaby)

- Alec Baldwin was always the first choice as the Boss Baby... years before we actually asked him to do it. We took a baby from 'Megamind' and animated it with Alec Baldwin lines from '30 Rock.' Alec saw those clips and fell in love with the concept of the movie.
- "He actually was having babies during the course of the recording of the voice, and channeled them. He helped define the Boss Baby with his flat and dry delivery, with a bit of baby added in – his unique modulation was able to achieve that mix." - McGrath
- "Over the course of three years, we had about 40 recording sessions, and he was always so generous and inspired by the material. We were thankful that he worked on the film, and gave so much to it. It was simply a great experience with him." - Ramsey Ann Naito

MILES BAKSHI (Tim) (PIC_003_Miles_Tim)

- "Grandson of the legendary animator Ralph Bakshi, and Tom had known Ralph for a long time. Miles came in to do some test 'scratch vocals' for Tim, and we fell in love with him. The quality of his work was authentic and real, with a charm and playfulness to his line readings." -McGrath

STEVE BUSCEMI (Francis Francis) (PIC_004_Steve_Francis)

- "We first did this sappy businessman look who had arrested development. As soon as Steve started recording him, we went back the character and redesigned him, to suit more what he was doing." - McGrath

JIMMY KIMMEL (Dad) / LISA KUDROW (Mom) (PIC_005_Lisa_Jimmy_Parents)

- "Lisa Kudrow and Jimmy Kimmel came into consideration by listening to their talk show banter. Jimmy was the first to admit he isn't an actor, but we just had to point out that he is a father, so he channeled that fatherhood and made his Dad a genuine character." - McGrath

TOBEY MCGUIRE (Adult Tim / Narrator)

- Known for *Spiderman*, *Pleasantville*, *Great Gatsby*

SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- The Boss Baby's line, "Cookies are for closers" is a parody of Alec Baldwin's famous line from *Glengarry Glen Ross*, "Coffee is for closers!"

DIRECTING (Tom McGrath) (PIC_006_Tom_Director)

- Directed *Madagascar Trilogy*, *Megamind*
- Animation master, and began his career in part under the tutelage of John Kricfalusi on "The Ren & Stimpy Show."
- "I was animating and doing story."

PRODUCTION/ANIMATION

- "But since we were doing a movie about a 7-year-old's imagination, we could be very stylized, very abstract, and very colorful. And we had our heroes of animation from the '40s, '50s, and '60s to draw on: Maurice Noble, Mary Blair, Ward Kimball, and Chuck Jones." - McGrath
- Marla Frazee's artwork was really charming, and we adapted it in a way, but really what we were trying to celebrate was the animation of the 1940s, '50s and '60s.
- **FANTASIES:**
 - Inspired by the Warner Bros. Looney Tunes shorts featuring goofy, daydreaming kid Ralph Phillips.
 - "And we pushed alternate realities where he's empowering himself or faced with a heroic moment. And they ended up going through the same pipeline as our character animation, but in terms of the designs and the backgrounds, they went through a different process." - Ramsey Naito (Producer)
 - The hybrid look was overseen by Andy Schuler ("Kung Fu Panda"), the fantasy sequences supervisor, who came up with his own workflow. "I'd model my shots in modo and do quick projection paintings in Nuke and we would send that to our layout department and previs and they'd give me final camera," he said.
 - The first sequence that Schuler tackled turned out to be the simplest: a hallway ninja fight in silhouette. A "Moby Dick" riff as Ahab on the ocean (done in Houdini to get simulated splashes to look graphic), however, became the most challenging.
- **EXPRESSIONS:**
 - They had too many points, and everything was mushy, and they weren't committing to a strong expression. So when we were rigging the characters, I asked that we do only half the controls that we normally have. It made them commit to expressions.

EDITING

- "There was this joke about synergy, and someone says, "You know you made that word up," and Boss Baby is like, "I wish!" But we figured not enough people had heard the word "synergy" for it to work. We had to cut another scene that I think everybody liked but it just took too much time — Boss Baby captured a puppy in his backyard and interrogated it in the playhouse. It was the traditional hard-boiled interrogation scene, but the puppy just has these big brown eyes." - McGrath

SOUND/MUSIC (Steve Mazzaro, Hans Zimmer)

- Zimmer has previously collaborated with McGrath on the director's previous four features, including all three *Madagascar* films and *Megamind*. The composer's other projects for

DreamWorks Animation include *The Prince of Egypt*, *Shark Tale*, *The Road to El Dorado*, *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* and the *Kung Fu Panda* movies.

- The film was scored by [Hans Zimmer](#), along with Steve Mazzaro and various artists. The film's soundtrack was released on [Back Lot Music](#) & iTunes. "Blackbird" by [The Beatles](#) is used as part of the plot at various points throughout the film

PROMOTION

- The film premiered at the [Miami Film Festival](#) on March 12, 2017
- The first trailer was released on National Boss's Day.

BOX OFFICE

- Total Lifetime Grosses (As of April 3rd): \$57,651,498
- Domestic: \$57,651,498
 - + Foreign: \$60,866,797
 - = Worldwide: \$118,518,295
- Domestic Summary
 - Opening Weekend: \$50,198,902
 - (#1 rank, 3,773 theaters, \$13,305 average)
 - 87.1% of Total Gross: %
- > View All Weekends
 - Widest Release: 3,773 theaters
 - In Release: 6 days / 0.9 weeks
- The Boss Baby narrowly beat Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and delivered a #1 finish this weekend as it vastly over performed pre-release industry expectations.
- It currently stands as the tenth largest opening for a DreamWorks Animated title
- Of the opening weekend audience, 53% were female vs. 47% male with 62% of the audience coming in under the age of 25.
- Boss Baby opened in five markets last weekend and brought in \$17.5 million, this weekend it added 37 markets and brought in an estimated \$36.2 million bringing its international cume to \$59 million. This result included DWA's best opening ever in Mexico with an estimated \$6.5 million along with a \$5.9 million opening in Russia and \$5.3 million in France. The Boss Baby still has 44 additional international markets where it has yet to be released, including the UK and Sweden next weekend.

RECEPTION

- IMDB: 6.2
- Cinemascore: A-
- RT: 50% Tatometer, 63% Audience
- Steve Pulaski of *Influx Magazine* gave the film a "C+" grade and praised the film's several animation styles and imagination, stating, "*The Boss Baby* is the middle-road done mostly well, a one-note joke movie that remains focused on the imaginative qualities its literal premise doesn't always inspire on the surface."

SEQUEL/LEGACY

FINAL THOUGHTS

