

UNCLE DREW (2018)

- June 29th, 2018
- 1 hrs 43 mins
- \$ budget
- Directed by Charles Stone III
- Written by Jay Longino
- Production company: Creators League Studio, Temple Hill Entertainment
- Rated PG-13 for suggestive material, language and brief nudity

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek

DEVELOPMENT

- **UNCLE DREW COMMERCIALS:**
 - The character Uncle Drew, played by Kyrie Irving, debuted in 2012 in a series of viral videos promoting a zero-calorie soft drink called Pepsi Max. The popular commercials earned Irving the kind of national recognition that few athletes ever experience. Pepsi Max no longer exists in the United States (it's sold as "Pepsi Zero Sugar" these days).
 - Pepsi wanted to film a commercial for its no-calorie cola, Pepsi Max, in which an athlete would show viewers what he would do with a lifetime supply of the drink. Initially, a football player was slotted for the role, but that fell through at the last minute. Pepsi executives contacted sports agent Jeff Wechsler, and he convinced them that his young client, Irving, would be perfect.
 - Irving, who had just completed his rookie season with the Cavaliers, was already in Florida, where the commercial was scheduled to be filmed.
 - There was no script, so they improvised, with Irving using the soda to do basketball drills. He dribbled between cases of Pepsi and carried them as if they were weights. He knocked cans off of people's heads with passes and did sit-ups with a two-liter bottle in his arms. The commercial concluded with Irving sitting in an ice bath filled with cans of the carbonated beverage.
 - "I personally had never had an experience with an athlete that was so collaborative and creative," said Marc Gilbar, executive director of Pepsi's advertising agency partner, Farm League. "It just got me really excited to do more with him, and thinking that maybe this was a unique opportunity to work with an athlete in a totally different kind of way."
 - Lou Arbetter, general manager of Pepsi Productions, said his group essentially agreed to a multiyear endorsement deal with Irving while sitting in the high school gym. The first brainstorming session even started there, including the possibility of Irving dressing up as an old man and playing against younger, unsuspecting opponents.
 - Uncle Drew, a play off of Irving's middle name of Andrew
 - The night before the first Uncle Drew commercial was filmed, Pepsi's creative team met with Irving to discuss the character. They watched old clips of character actors such as Eddie Murphy, who had mastered the art of transformation by playing various roles in the "Nutty Professor" movies, and they asked Irving about his vision of Uncle Drew.
 - At one point, as the creative team gave him more instructions about what motivated his character, Irving said, unprompted: "I get buckets."
 - But Pepsi's ad executives insist that the bit and the surprise were fully authentic, and that they went to great lengths to make it that way.

- the ad, which has now been viewed more than 52 million times on YouTube, was a sensation.
- NBA players, including Kevin Love, Nate Robinson, Baron Davis, and Ray Allen.
- On February 16, 2017, PepsiCo announced that they would partner with Temple Hill Entertainment for the production of a film that would feature the character Uncle Drew, famous from the Pepsi Max advertisements.
- Marty Bowen and John Fischer, executives at Temple Hill Entertainment, were interested in making a movie about an American basketball player who goes to China to find himself
- Fischer reached out to Wechsler with a surprising suggestion. They wanted to make Uncle Drew, the movie. Irving loved the idea, and after a screenplay was written, it did not take long for Lionsgate Films to come on board.
- February 12, 2018, Kyrie Irving announced the release date of June 29, 2018 via his Twitter account

WRITING (Jay Longino)

- *Skiptrace*
- Longino, who played professional basketball in both Mexico and the now-defunct United States Basketball League, is the sole writer
- “My initial answer was no,” Longino said. “But (movie producer) Marty Bowen said, ‘You’re an idiot. You’re wrong, and you’ll realize that in 24 hours and you’ll call me back and say you want to do it.’ He was right. I called him back the next day and said, ‘I actually think I can crack this.’”
- “We just honed on the theme of you don’t stop playing basketball because you get old, you get old because you stop playing basketball. The narrative fell into place after that.”
- He played Division III basketball at Colorado College from 1992-96 and once scored 39 points in a game, chucking 12 three-pointers. He had a brief stints playing professionally in Mexico and in the USBL.
- It’s a movie the whole family will enjoy and the message for kids: you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take,” Longino said. “That’s what the movie is really all about, and that message will resonate with kids and athletes. More than anything, a lot of people will say ‘I get it.’”

STORY/TOPICS

- Building a team
- Redemption
- Family

CAST:

KYRIE IRVING (Uncle Drew)

- During production, Kyrie found out that he had been traded to Boston.
- “It’s an incredible family movie with an incredible story and I’m looking forward to everyone seeing it. I’ve always believed in paying homage to the older generations.”
- “I was trying to come in every single day remembering lines to where I didn’t have to be ‘Line, please,” ’ Irving said. “I did not want to be that person.”
- “Uncle Drew has given me inspiration in terms of me being able to convey my old soul through who he is and what he embodies as a character,” he said.
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LIL REL HOWERY (Dax)

- "After 'Get Out' came out, basically every producer and studio wanted to meet with me,"
- One of those first meetings was with producer Marty Bowen, who pitched him "Uncle Drew." Among the many reasons he said yes to the leading role was that the picture

SHAQ (Big Fella)

- Sports analyst on the television program *Inside the NBA*.
- Drafted by the Orlando Magic with the first overall pick in the 1992 NBA draft.
- After four years with the Magic, O'Neal signed as a free agent with the Los Angeles Lakers. They won three consecutive championships in 2000, 2001, and 2002.
- 1999–2000 MVP award, the 1992–93 NBA Rookie of the Year award, 15 All-Star game selections, three All-Star Game MVP awards, three Finals MVP awards, two scoring titles, 14 All-NBA team selections, and three NBA All-Defensive Team selections.
- Retired a Boston Celtic (2010–2011) season
- "There's jokes about Shaq not being able throw free throws. Like, pass the ball Kobe. And Shaq is like, you take it for granted because we actually know Shaq is funny. But Shaq is so funny." -Kroll
- "I was surprised they put [butt shot] in the movie with him being 7-9 and the biggest person on earth," Robinson said. "We can honestly say we saw the fattest ass ever."

CHRIS WEBBER (Preacher)

- Selected by the Orlando Magic with the first pick of the 1993 NBA draft
- The Magic immediately traded him to the Golden State Warriors
- He is a five-time NBA All-Star, a five-time All-NBA Team member, a former NBA Rookie of the Year, and a former number one overall NBA draftee.
- Webber averaged 20.7 points, 9.8 rebounds, and 4.2 assists during his NBA career.
- Webber has become an analyst on NBA TV's *NBA Gametime Live*.
- Power forward (position Four)
- "The funniest was Chris Webber. Chris Webber owned that preacher character. He had the voice and the sermon. He said his father was a preacher." -Lil Rey
- Irving said Preacher baptismal scene is his favorite scene. "in that church cracking up" when they were filming it.

REGGIE MILLER (Lights)

- Played his entire 18-year National Basketball Association (NBA) career with the Indiana Pacers.
- Selected by the Pacers with the 11th pick in the 1st round of the 1987 NBA draft.
- Miller was known for his precision three-point shooting
- When he retired, he held the record for most career 3-point field goals made, which his record has since been broken by Ray Allen.
- His No. 31 was retired by the team in 2006.
- NBA commentator for TNT

NATE ROBINSON (Boots)

- Robinson was selected with the 21st overall pick by the Phoenix Suns in the 2005 NBA draft.
- During the All-Star weekend, Robinson won the 2006 Sprite Rising Stars Slam Dunk Contest

- February 14, 2009, Robinson won the 2009 Sprite Slam Dunk Competition. In the final round, Robinson, who is only 5 feet 9, jumped over Dwight Howard (6 feet 11 inches) for the slam.

LISA LESLIE (Betty Lou)

- 6 feet 3 inches
- Leslie was drafted on January 22 by the Los Angeles Sparks
- She is a three-time WNBA MVP and a four-time Olympic gold medal winner.
- 2001 Sportswoman of the Year
- Eight WNBA All-Star selections and two WNBA championships over the course of eleven seasons with the Los Angeles Sparks.
- Leslie was the first player to dunk in a WNBA game
- In 2015, she was elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

TIFFANY HADDISH (Jess)

- “When I came to work the first day, [Webber & Miller] all took pictures with me and stuff,” says Haddish
- “I didn’t realize [Kyrie] was in costume. I was like, ‘Rel, Rel, what the fuck is goin’ on with his neck?’ He was like, ‘Tiffany, that’s Kyrie.’ I was like, ‘Who?’ ”
- Haddish explains that she stopped following basketball closely when she got married. “I stopped paying attention since 2008.
- “I read the script and — this is kinda corny — but something about it makes me feel really good. It’s like *Space Jam* or something.”

NICK KROLL (Mookie)

- “How could I not go be the token white guy in a basically all-black movie with NBA legends and WNBA legends who I would theoretically get to play basketball with?” the comedian says with a laugh. “It’s one of those jobs where I think at every age, if I told myself that I would be doing it, every age of me would be psyched. People pay to go to fantasy camp where they can play basketball with pros; I got paid to go to fantasy camp.” -Kroll
- “I might not be NBA legend status, but I was pretty good on my Jewish day school basketball team, so I felt like maybe if things had gone another way I could have ended up in the NBA and not in comedy,” says Kroll
- “But I did score on Kyrie. I hit a layup that he tried to block and missed it, and then I got real cocky, I might have gotten a little too cocky and was like, ‘I want to guard Kyrie.’”
- “I was chewing two pieces of Hubba Bubba pink bubble gum at all times,” he says

DIRECTING: (Charles Stone III)

- *Step Sisters, Drum Line, Greenleaf, Mr. 3000*
- “His outlook on character is much wider than a supporting role,” Stone said. “His attention to detail and the arc of the character was really strong and sensitive. That, to me, helps a person who’s playing a lead [properly] execute it.”- Lil Rey

TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- Sal Masekela, John Calipari, Jon Hammond, Scoop Jackson, Pee Wee Kirkland, Earl Monroe, Chris Mullin, Bill Walton, George Gervin, Steve Nash, David Robinson, Jerry West, Dikembe Mutombo and NeNe Leakes.
- The only current NBA player in *Uncle Drew* is the Orlando Magic’s Aaron Gordon, and he plays a generic streetballer named Casper who betrays Dax and joins Mookie’s team.

- Uncle Drew reminds Preacher that they have no more timeouts. This is in reference to Chris Webber, who portrays Preacher, calling a timeout his team - The Michigan Wolverines- didn't have during the NCAA championship in the 1990s which ended up costing his team the chance to win.
- Both Kyrie Irving (Uncle Drew) & Shaquille O'Neal (Big Fella) played on the Cleveland Cavaliers with LeBron James although they missed playing with each other by one year (the year Kyrie was drafted, Shaq had gone on to play with the Boston Celtics).
- Erica Ash & Tiffany Haddish both played in the series "Real Husbands of Hollywood".

PRODUCTION/ANIMATION (Crash)

- Known for *Real Time with Bill Maher: Truth Serum, 50 Cent Feat. Olivia: Candy Shop*
- The movie was shot in the summer of 2017

SOUND/MUSIC (Christopher Lennertz)

1. "Harlem Anthem" – A\$AP Ferg
2. "1942" – G-Eazy feat. Yo Gotti and YBN Nahmir
3. "New Thang" – French Montana & Remy Ma
4. "Cocky" – A\$AP Rocky Gucci Mane & 21 Savage feat. London On Da Track
5. "I Can Feel It" – GoldLink feat. H.E.R.
6. "Light Flex" – Tone Stith feat. 2 Chainz
7. "Chain Gang" – Leikeli47 feat. Clyde Guevara
8. "Ballin" – Logic
9. "Records" – Cousin Stizz
10. "Stronger" – Dipset
11. "I Need Your Lovin" – Nao
12. "Stay" – Khalid
13. "Us" – Kid Ink feat. Elley Duhé
14. "What's the Play" – Wiz Khalifa
15. "Clap Your Hands" – Grace
16. "Ridiculous" – Kyrie Irving feat. LunchMoney Lewis

PROMOTION

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BOX OFFICE

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RECEPTION

- RT: %
- Cinemascore: A-
- IMDB: 6.6/10

SEQUELS/LEGACY

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