

**JAMES K.
POLK
WAS
@#?!ING
AWESOME**

PRESS KIT

GUY IN HIS BASEMENT PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

"JAMES K. POLK WAS @#?!ING AWESOME"

CAROLYN SIEGEL

MUSIC BY ANDREW SKRABUTENAS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ERIC BRANCO

WRITTEN, DIRECTED, PRODUCED AND EDITED BY ADAM BERTOCCI



ABOUT THE FILM

History comes alive. Like some horrifying zombie that must be destroyed.

The “great man” theory of history only works when you pick the right great man. So how is it that James K. Polk, the 11th President of the United States of America and easily one of our greatest, is condemned to obscurity? Why are his myriad accomplishments not sung alongside those of Washington, Lincoln, a Roosevelt or two? How has the dark horse candidate who in one term expanded his country from sea to shining sea not become a household name?

This film doesn’t know. But it’s about to set a few things right.

Under the tutelage of noted Presidential historian and snappy dresser Delaney Knox-Childress (Carolyn Siegel), *James K. Polk Was @#!ing Awesome* takes you through the life, times and minutia of James K. Polk with the passion, spirit, and most importantly the profanity that no serious study of American history should be without. In under six minutes, you won’t just hear the case made for a President ahead of his time; you will come to understand the very nature of the American character.

Also, you’ll hear the f-word a couple of times. Hold on tight.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Some films are the result of years of preparation, soul-searching and hard work.

Just, not this one.

Adapted from a comic essay writer-director Adam Bertocci posted online to amuse some friends, *James K. Polk Was @#!ing Awesome* was shot in one day in a photo studio in Manhattan, with longtime star Carolyn Siegel assuming the highly profane comic voice. Total people involved in the shoot: four.

Inspired by Bertocci’s brief bursts into song to mark the placement of music in the rough cut, composer Andrew Skrabutenas pitched the idea of incorporating a little *a cappella* chorus into the film’s soundscape: a quartet, maybe an octet... eventually, a sixteen-piece chorus was hired; with Skrabutenas and his recording engineer, this totalled eighteen people providing the music for a movie shot by four people, only one of whom appears on screen.

Not bad for a production originally meant just to amuse a few shut-ins on the Internet.

STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR

Wasn't this supposed to be fun?

I asked myself that question a lot during the production of my last film, *Brooklyn Force*. It had always been a trying little project... problems with delays, weather, schedule conflicts. The final day of shooting, besotted with audio problems, was a dark one for me. It was the first day I'd ever spent makin' movies where I actually wanted it to be over. I wasn't having fun.

Even as post-production and scoring dragged on, I vowed that I needed some kind of a palate-cleanser for my next project. Something simple, something where we could just shoot in the easiest, laziest conditions possible and not worry about the end result. Something where we could afford, financially and creatively, to fail. Something fun.

My mind wandered back to a comic essay I'd posted on NP2K.com, an Internet forum populated largely by filmmakers. Something about it stuck with me, and in the fall of 2008—certainly an interesting time to think about Presidents—I began adapting it as a performance piece. What kind of piece? Well, a number of ideas passed through my mind, but I decided to follow the “keep it simple, stupid” philosophy: a beautiful girl, a white wall and an astonishingly silly monologue about our 11th President.

What is it about Presidents? I really don't know. As a kid, I was into Presidents the way most young boys are with dinosaurs. I had twelve-inch figures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln on my clothes chest. I remember solemnly announcing to my mom that Warren G. Harding died of a heart attack, expecting to start a conversation around that fact. Back when George H.W. Bush was running in '88, I did some research and noted with surprise that he would be our first President to be born in June.

Obscure Presidents are fun, too. Just the names of old-timey non-luminaries like Millard Fillmore and Rutherford B. Hayes amuse us. But I do consider James K. Polk vastly underrated, as do many historians. And I'd be thrilled if this movie gets one more person interested in learning about Polk, about Presidential history and our American heritage. Reading and education should be fun. Learning about America's history should definitely be fun.

Fun, we're back to that; and yet I consider myself a serious filmmaker. Yes, so this sort of film is more suited to YouTube than Cannes. That's no crime. What, you've never heard the phrase “serious fun”?

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS AND CAST

ADAM BERTOCCI (writer-director-producer-editor-etc.) is a radio-television-film alumnus of Northwestern University and an award-winning filmmaker.

This is his tenth short for the festival circuit: past successes include *Run Leia Run*, *Love: The Movie*, *Pat Gets a Cat* and *Brooklyn Force*.

In his professional capacity as an editor and digital artist, he has worked on everything from features to documentaries to television series.

Bertocci is also in demand as a screenwriter; most recently, he wrote the Christmas comedy *Wreck the Halls* starring Hollywood legend Mickey Rooney.

CAROLYN SIEGEL (“Delaney Knox-Childress”) is an alumna of the theatre and creative writing for the media programs at Northwestern University. She has appeared in numerous films and plays, including “The Oedipus Complex” with Oscar- and Tony-winner Frank Galati, but her most famous work may be with Adam Bertocci in *Love: The Movie*, *The World of the End*, *Madison’s Résumé* and most recently *Brooklyn Force*. She is also a talented writer whose “Aspiration: Housewife” played the NY Fringe Festival.

ERIC BRANCO (director of photography) is a professional cinematographer who has worked on countless films, music videos and commercials in and around New York; recent projects include the horror feature *Satan Hates You* and Adam Bertocci’s own *Brooklyn Force*. He is in pre-production on a feature of his own, currently titled *Stay Hungry*.

ANDREW SKRABUTENAS (composer) is studying music composition at The University of California, Irvine, where he has already racked up an astonishing collection of credits on student and independent films, most recently *The Hunt for Gollum*. Prior scores include the works of Joe Wilka and Eddie Lebron.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

GUY IN HIS BASEMENT PRODUCTIONS, established in 2000, develops low-budget media with a unique and decidedly independent flair. The company is committed to a vision of personal filmmaking with professional quality on an amateur’s budget. The brand is owned and managed by co-founders Adam Bertocci and Kent Sanderson.

www.guyinhisbasement.com

GUY IN HIS BASEMENT PRODUCTIONS presents

**JAMES K. POLK
WAS @#?!ING AWESOME**

written, directed, produced and edited by
ADAM BERTOCCI

director of photography
ERIC BRANCO

music by
ANDREW SKRABUTENAS

performed by
CAROLYN SIEGEL
as Delaney Knox-Childress

featuring ADAM BERTOCCI as the voice of James K. Polk

CREW

assistant camera SHANNON EMIGH

titles ADAM BERTOCCI

MUSIC

score composed and performed by ANDREW SKRABUTENAS
www.andrewskrabutenas.com

recording engineer ROSS WHITNEY

Singers

sopranos: HEATHER WELLS

BELINDA LAU

CELESTE WYCHOPEN

MARY LA FACE

altos: TARA WALDSCHMIDT

ASHLEY MAC

ISABEL WANG

beatboxer: DAVID SANTOS

tenors: KENNETH HARO

ANTHONY KANEASTER

STERLING ROBERTS

ALEX HOFF

basses: BENJAMIN CARDULLO

ANDREW BALL

BEN JOHNS

LEO WIGGINS

SPECIAL THANKS TO

GOD

ARTHUR COHEN

ONENINE FILMS

THE FILMMAKERS OF NP2K.COM

THE BERTOCCI FAMILY

wWith apologies to TMBG and DAVID SHIRE

Shot in New York, NY

HD camera by Panasonic

Edited on Final Cut Pro by Apple

Additional sound mixed and edited with Soundtrack Pro by Apple

Titles created with Adobe Photoshop

www.guyinhisbasement.com