

TIME BOMB Y2K

2023

USA

80 min

LOGLINE

As the clock counts down to the dawn of the new millennium, America is forced to contend with the largest technological disaster to ever threaten humanity. Crafted entirely through archival footage, Time Bomb Y2K examines how we grapple with existential threats in an increasingly technological world.

SYNOPSIS

When the year 2000 approached, rumblings spread from computer engineers to the mainstream consciousness about a ubiquitous error in computer code that could cause the world's computerized systems to grind to a halt. This fully archival feature (no interviews, verité, etc.) documents the countdown to Y2K against the backdrop of the mass hysteria that infiltrated everything from politics to pop culture. TIME BOMB Y2K is a wild ride through the final days of the '90s and a compelling portrait of a turning point in the digital revolution. By examining this hinge point between millennia, the film interrogates our ever-changing relationship to technology and each other.

Directors: Brian Becker and Marley McDonald

Producer: Brian Becker

Editor: Marley McDonald, Maya Mumma

Executive Producers: Penny Lane, Gabriel Sedgwick, For HBO: Tina Nguyen, Nancy Abraham, Lisa Heller

Composer: Nathan Micay

Animation: Grin Machine (Cole Kush and Tom Goulet)

Sound: Tom Paul

FESTIVALS

True/False 2023: World Premiere

BAFICI 2023: International Premiere

Hot Docs 2023: Canadian Premiere

Sheffield DocFest 2023: European Premiere

WEBSITE

<https://y2kfilm.com/>

PULL QUOTES

"The all-archive film is fast and funny with a propulsive 90s-inspired soundtrack. It's thoughtful, too, in the connections it draws between this bizarre relic of cultural history and the preventable disasters the world has experienced since." - Simran Hans, Sight and Sound (Print Only)

"Enormously entertaining... 'Y2K' may not have been the end of the world, but McDonald and Becker brilliantly illustrate how fragile a society we have, less so for its technology than the public discourse." - Stephen Saito, Moveable Fest

<https://moveablefest.com/brian-becker-marley-mcdonald-time-bomb-y2k/>

"A sleek, lean film that never falters." - Scott Phillips, Forbes

[\(https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottphillips/2023/03/13/the-truefalse-film-festival-an-annual-launching-pad-for-documentary-films/\)](https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottphillips/2023/03/13/the-truefalse-film-festival-an-annual-launching-pad-for-documentary-films/)

"10 new documentaries to watch for"

"Time Bomb Y2K uses archival footage from the late 1990s to reconstruct what happened and why, and the results are often comical. But what it establishes, subtly, is something much darker: that while we were all focused on a bug, the seeds of all kinds of today's plagues were taking root, from radical nationalism and gun fervor to mass inattention to the climate crisis to the undermining of expertise and authority. The movie ends on a positive note, one that looks toward the future, but it's bittersweet all these years later." - Alissa Wilkinson, Vox

<https://www.vox.com/culture/23669752/best-documentaries-2023-berlinale-true-false-sxsw>

"Moving at a fast clip, it's an unabashedly fun ride — as much a mirror of our current cultural nostalgia for the 90s/aughts as it is a thorough historical account." - Saelyx Finna, Redefine Magazine

<https://redefinemag.net/2023/true-false-film-fest-2023-film-picks-narrative-documentary-immigration-politics-propaganda-y2k/>

"The Y2K bug could be a teachable moment; instead, it's already an artifact for reasons that go way beyond laughing at primitive webcam streaming. Time Bomb manages to convey all of this clearly without voiceover, title cards or sledgehammer-heavy editorial juxtaposition, a feat that's impressive in its legibility" - Vadim Rizov, Filmmaker Magazine

<https://filmmakermagazine.com/120070-true-false-film-fest-2023-reviews-la-bonga-time-bomb-y2k-three-women-anhell69/#.ZEIqbOzMKCR>

"Becker and McDonald aren't always playing things for jokes or being overly serious, instead presenting the truth that lies between those extremes. People are still getting used to such omnipresent levels of interconnectedness, and Time Bomb Y2K looks at the flashpoint where that shift in culture met up with social issues and technological imperfections in a huge way." - Andrew Parker, The Gate

<https://www.thegate.ca/film/060208/hot-docs-2023-review-time-bomb-y2k/>

BIOS

BRIAN BECKER - DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER Brian Becker is a New York-based filmmaker who most recently directed and produced his debut feature *Time Bomb Y2K* (co-directed with Marley McDonald). The film premiered at True/False Film Festival in March, 2023 and will air on HBO in December, 2023. He served as an archival producer on *Free Chol Soo Lee*, *MLK/FBI*, and *Spaceship Earth*, and as a co-producer on *Bobby Kennedy for President*. Brian is a 2022 Doc NYC 40 Under 40 recipient, Impact Partners Producing Fellow, Points North Fellow, and a FOCAL Jane Mercer Researcher of the Year award nominee. Before turning to production, he worked as a mosquito ecologist.

MARLEY MCDONALD - DIRECTOR AND EDITOR Marley McDonald is a filmmaker, animator and painter living in Queens, New York. In 2021, she was chosen as a Points North Fellow and worked as an additional editor on Penny Lane's film *Listening to Kenny G*. Her associate editor work includes *Spaceship Earth*, and the Golden Lion-winning and Oscar-nominated documentary, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*. She most recently directed and edited her debut feature, *Time Bomb Y2K* (co-directed with Brian Becker) for HBO.

FILMMAKER STATEMENT

Y2K was neither the first nor the last time our world faced its own end. As millennials we feel a certain privilege to telling stories about the end of the world, having seen the world as we know it collapse again and again. New Year's Eve 2000 was quite literally the beginning of the end. Through extensive research and collaboration with characters, we crafted the film utilizing only archival material, placing viewers squarely within the high anxieties and immense hopes of the final days of the last millennium. *Y2K* is a singular moment in history that laid bare our increasing reliance on computers and complex systems, which allowed us to examine the means by which individuals and communities search for answers in the face of existential threat.