



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on March 29, 2012

## October Baby, Doonby Successful in Spite of Studio Rejection

According to Fox News, the newly-released pro-life movie *October Baby* “earned the second-highest-per-screen average” last weekend — behind *The Hunger Games* — grossing \$1.7 million, for 8th place overall. Considering the competition, and that it opened in only 390 theaters, this is a remarkable feat. Director Jon Erwin (left) stated, “Here is our little film, small budget, in the top ten [at the box office]. We are thrilled, blown away.”



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Erwin told *Fox News* that he was not an activist, just someone who was shattered by the truth of the story: that women regret their abortions, and that there are far-reaching consequences. Interestingly, *October Baby* almost never made it to the screen at all. In the beginning, Erwin recalled, “This film couldn’t find a home; no studio wanted to touch it. It was considered too controversial. There was a real moment of despair at one point. The film wasn’t finished and nobody would take a look at it. But every time we screened it, it attracted such intense emotional reactions. So we had to raise the money ourselves, and the release process took much longer than we wanted.”

*October Baby* was able to capture the backing of the American Family Association, enabling its finish and initial distribution. Director Erwin is hoping for a wider release next month, with Christian schools and churches in some communities forming groups to buy blocks of tickets. Fox News reported that Dr. Ted Baehr, founder of *Movieguide.org*, had high praise for the film: “All who see it should be transformed, so considering the importance of the message, everyone should see it. It needs more theatrical exposure.”

[Doonby](#) writer/director Peter Mackenzie experienced difficulties similar to Erwin’s with his independent movie. A more seasoned filmmaker, he told *The New American* that he faced an uphill struggle when presenting his movie — also a message related to abortion and the importance of life — to major studios. “It defies branding, and they didn’t know what to do with it. We were left having to raise distribution money on our own. But we knew going in that we would face that hurdle.”



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Mackenzie explained that *Doonby* is a mainstream film, reaching beyond just the pro-life audience. Because it is not a faith film such as *October Baby*, he said it had a different problem getting noticed, though the result was the same. “The studios considered it too controversial, but it can be considered a film that bridges the gap between faith films and the rest of the world. It’s a mainstream movie with a moral message. After all, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, almost every major religion opposes abortion, so the message can’t be limited to Christians.”

“Although I’m Catholic, I didn’t come at it from a Catholic viewpoint, but from one of logical ethics, morals. The species is at stake. We are the only species that kills its young for expediency’s sake. None but ours kills its young for convenience. We wanted to pose the question, ‘Have you really thought about this?’”

“Once you lose respect for life, it’s a slippery slope. And who gave politicians the right to sit in a room and arbitrarily decide the number of weeks required before it [the unborn child] is a person?”

Both these filmmakers have tapped into this highly-charged issue with amazing fortitude. Securing notice for an independent film these days isn’t easy; but once they get attention, they really get it. *Doonby* has received praise from even the Vatican, along with other pro-life and religious leaders. In fact, it has been recommended by the Dove Foundation, known for its endorsements of movies suitable for family audiences. Still, the film — about a mysterious drifter who changes and improves the lives of everyone he meets in a small Texas town — is edgier than most studios are comfortable with.

The message of *Doonby* is a desperately important one. Mackenzie explained that in his native UK, recent reports have surfaced regarding gender selection related to the burgeoning abortion industry. One report out of England — on the slippery slope to the Chinese model (where families resort to abortion or infanticide of female babies to ensure that their government-mandated only one child is a boy) — indicates evidence that now there are more female than male [fetuses aborted](#) there.

*Doonby* includes a cameo appearance by Norma McCorvey — “Jane Roe” of *Roe v. Wade*, who renounced her pro-choice position and is now strongly pro-life — who makes perhaps the most powerful case around for the devastating effects of cavalier choices.

Popular support for these two films may not reverse the trend toward “choice,” but will go a long way in revealing the consequences of abortion. A percentage of profits, in fact, from both films will be donated to the pro-life cause. In Mackenzie’s words, “Every life is important.”



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