

# *‘Stop and Go’ with Producer Babetta Kelly*



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This October 1, *Stop and Go* (2021), formerly known as *Recovery*, hits select theaters and on demand. This pandemic-inspired comedy tells the story of two directionless sisters who brave a cross-country road trip with a single mission in mind; to reach their grandmother at her nursing home before COVID-19 can. Prepare for the best road trip during the worst year.

The film, which received great praise during its *SXSW '21* premiere, makes a careful effort of highlighting the humor that was found in the early pandemic days. From toilet paper mania to straight up drowning our groceries in disinfectant, there's certainly laughter to be found when looking back on those very strange, yet collectively shared, moments. After all that madness that we've been through, *Stop and Go* may just be that sigh of relief and much needed dose of laughter audiences are after.

Still, bringing *Stop and Go* to life wasn't all laughs and smiles. On the surface it may seem like a fairly straightforward film to have produced, considering the

majority of the film takes place inside a car and primarily stars just a cast of two, **Mallory Everton** and **Whitney Call**. Yet, when you add in the fact that it was all shot during 2020, you can begin to imagine the challenges and headaches that a producer might have faced. But for producer **Babetta Kelly**, it was a task worth taking.

Today, we sit down with Babetta Kelly, producer behind *Stop and Go*, to discuss what it took to overcome the unique hurdles she faced while making a film in the middle of the pandemic. From how she got her first start in filmmaking to now having a feature film hit go nationwide and appear on the big screen, this is Babetta Kelly's journey as a producer on *Stop and Go*.



**How would you describe your journey into producing? Have you found it to be fairly conventional or have you chartered your own course and ventured off the beaten path?**

I'm not really sure what conventional would even look like in the film world. I guess if it's starting as a production assistant and moving your way up, then yes? But I don't think I ever intended to become a producer. In that way, my path was a lot of falling into one position after another and giving it my best shot. To be honest, I'm still trying things out. I'm not sure where I'm going to land.

**What about producing did you discover that surprised you only after you began to get into the thick of it and do it yourself?**

I think I was surprised at how fun it can be. When you find the right crew for the right job, things just start to click and magical stuff can happen. As a producer, you get to watch it all unfold and that's a pretty wonderful place to be.

**“I also hope that I set a tone that is kind and understanding; where everyone wants to put in good work but we all know that, ultimately, the people come before the project.”**

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**Can you describe your process as a producer? Have you found there are things you do in a unique way that no one else does?**

I don't think it's unique to me, but I do feel like one of my strengths is bringing together a great crew. I also hope that I set a tone that is kind and understanding; where everyone wants to put in good work but we all know that, ultimately, the people come before the project.

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**“Give yourself a break and truly cut out a bit of time for yourself. And then don't feel bad about it.”**

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**What is the key to surviving as a producer throughout the grueling process of making a film?**

Ah, such a good question. It's so easy to get caught up in the project and let it completely run your life. I think film culture kind of expects it of you, too. But one thing that I'm learning for myself is how important it is to carve out a little time every day where I stop and refuse to check my emails and messages. Even if it's a short time and even if it's something as simple as not looking at

my phone as I walk my dog, I just find that it's helpful to not be on call 24/7. Most things don't need to happen right this second. Most things are not an actual emergency. Give yourself a break and truly cut out a bit of time for yourself. And then don't feel bad about it.



**What's the one 'must-have' personality trait that makes a producer rise above the rest?**

I'm the wrong person to ask, haha! I don't know. Honestly, I don't feel particularly interested in rising above the rest, so I probably won't. I'm not really driven that way. I just want to make good things with good people. If that means smaller gigs for the rest of my life, I'm good with that.

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**“I think that sometimes our personal dreams can feel unattainable just because they put us in such a vulnerable position.”**

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**Do you feel like your natural talents align with producing or is there another avenue in film that you hope to go down one day?**

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I'm definitely still exploring. I think I'm discovering that I can do the logistical work that is needed for producing, but it doesn't come so naturally. It takes a special effort from me. I did a bit of writing recently and that felt really good. Maybe I'll head back to more of that and more directing, which was my focus in school. We'll see.

**What was your favorite aspect of producing for *Stop and Go*?**

Mallory and Whitney are such talented writers and performers, it's a joy to see them in action. And our tiny and immensely talented crew was so sweet and generous under pretty grueling, low-budget restraints. I was so grateful for them every single day.

When Sorø Films came on board it was such a relief and so exciting. They gave us the boost we needed to keep going. It was amazing to feel the confidence they had in the production. It instantly made us feel more legitimate. And I loved having meetings with Scott and Whitney Christopherson, two of my favorite people. They're so talented and so real. And every person I've interacted with at Sorø is just the cream of the crop. Abi Nielson, Emma Spears. Everyone. So kind, so professional, and just a joy to be around.

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**“Lean into your instincts. Honor them.”**

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**For someone who is looking to break into the industry as a producer, what's the single best piece of advice you would give them?**

If this is something you really want to do, then absolutely go for it. I think that sometimes our personal dreams can feel unattainable just because they put us in such a vulnerable position. But if I can produce things then you DEFINITELY can. Just work hard and be kind.

**If you could give your younger self one piece of advice about producing, working in the industry, or life in general what would it be?**

Lean into your instincts. Honor them.

**If you had to describe your experience producing in one word, what would it be?**

Adventure.

**How can people follow your work and stay connected?**

Oh dear. I've taken a long social media break and I'm not sure when I'll go back. But on instagram I'm @babetta and @babettakelly and you can see my old, hot takes on twitter @babettakelly. Or just follow my sister, @tesskkelly. I'm featured in her feed sometimes. And she's also a much more accomplished producer. This could be an all-around win for you, now that I think about it.

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*Stop and Go* hits select theaters and on demand October 1. To learn more, [visit here](#).



LISTEN TO BABETTA KELLY ON THE SORØ FILMS PODCAST

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