

**Q: What inspired you to make this film?**

A: “The inspiration for *Chemical* came from research I did during the production of *Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home*. In that film I had a family keep their waste for three months to connect the dots between the pollution we create at home and to show how their lifestyle affects the environment.”

“One of the areas we explored, for *Garbage!*, was the effects that cleaning products have on our water and the environment. Through that analysis we discovered that waste water and air quality in the family home are affected by cleaning and personal care products. I thought this subject alone was worthy of further examination and I came up with the idea to have another family rid their home of all toxic cleaners and personal care products and figure out how to live without them or make their own.”

**Q: What are some of the issues you discovered with these products?**

A: “Well, I just looked at the labels. I saw what was in these products and I started to do research on all the common ingredients. Why are they in there? What do they do? However, the majority of the products don’t list their ingredients so I had dig elsewhere to find most of that information.”

“One of the great resources I found was the cosmetics database ([www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com)) online, which is an incredible web resource. It goes behind the scenes to explore the ingredients in your personal care products.”

“In the process of doing the research, we discovered a tremendous amount of these chemicals are rushed to market and they’re self regulated, which means the government doesn’t require corporations to submit the chemicals for testing. In our society, it’s good enough for these companies to just say that these chemicals are safe for human use. We tend not to ask questions.”

“Some of these chemicals, such as ammonia and chlorine, were initially developed for industrial purposes. Chlorine and Ammonia were mixed together to form Chloramine Gas as a chemical weapon used in the First World War. After the war there were stockpiles of these chemicals and scientists had to figure out ways to repurpose them so they started infusing them in cleaning products.”

“Before the introduction of these chemicals in our homes we used simple products like vinegar, water, lemon, baking soda and salt.”

**Q: How hard was it to find a family to volunteer for three months and rid themselves of all their cleaners?**

A: “It wasn’t that hard at all actually. We were on TV promoting *Garbage!* and mentioned that our next film was going to be focused on chemicals in the home. We had hundreds of families respond to us, via email so we put on Craigslist to find families. These families submitted video auditions to showcase all of the toxic products they keep in their homes, and we ended up choosing the Goode’s because that had a tremendous amount of these products and were also a fun group of people.”

**Q: Were there any exceptions on what sort of chemicals they had to remove from their home?**

A: “We didn’t go hardcore. Chemicals are good and bad, so we like to say they removed “toxins” from their home. When it came to personal care and cleaning products, we got rid of everything. We introduced them to people who could help them replace the products with natural and homemade alternatives. At the end of the process the family felt better physically, and were happy with the money they saved.”

“They made their own dishwashing and laundry soap, window cleaner, deodorant, toothpaste and shampoo. Strangely enough, the majority of these things were all made with the same ingredients.”

“- And guess what, they didn’t lose any friends in the process. They smelled good *and* felt good!”

“It’s a funny thing, and we talk about this in the movie, but we’ve become accustomed to smelling like things we actually aren’t. A couple hundred years ago people would rarely take baths. They’d wash their hands and in order to look clean and neat they’d wear pressed, clean, white linen and change their clothes when they got dirty. They were afraid to take baths because they thought the hot water would open their pores and let in diseases and germs. Our natural smells were common back then but today we’ve gotten used to smelling like something from another planet. We don’t smell like human beings as Katherine Ashenberg tells us in the movie.”

**Q: What did the family do after filming finished?**

A: “They’ve stuck with it, but it’s only been a few months. Time will tell.”

**Q: What sort of devices do you use in the film to get your message across?**

A: “We created the *Chemerical* brand, which is a combination of the words chemical, America, and miracle. We thought this film would be an opportunity for people to re-think the way they clean their homes, and it would be our opportunity to re-brand the way we all clean. After all, the

way we clean and learn to clean has been shaped by how everything is marketed, which started in the 1940s.”

“The creation of the soap opera brought an avalanche of cleaning ads into the home, targeted at housewives.”

“We have animation in the film, and what we’ve done is gone back to the old cartoon ads, that used to pitch cleaning products in the home, and we’ve given them a fresh look. We’ve created a new *Chemical* family with a new pitch person, and we’re re-defining clean for a new generation throughout the film.”

“These ads are a tongue-in-cheek ode to the way we clean. For example, the revolutionary new *Chemical* air freshener is called OTW, which simply stands for Open The Window.”

“There are other products we’re pitching throughout the film that are just as simple, old-fashioned ways of cleaning: vinegar, water, baking soda and essential oils. That’s it. That’s the way *Chemical* cleans.”

“It’s a counter-reaction to the over-saturation of the cleaning market, to which we’ve been subjected to for the past 60 years.”

**Q: How and when will the film be released?**

A: We are having our World Premiere at the Whistler Film Festival when the film screens on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. “It’s being released on Super Channel in Canada on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and we’re very excited about that. We hope that people will support and subscribe to Super Channel which is a great alternative to other movie networks in Canada.”

“Otherwise people can buy the film directly from our website ([www.takeactionfilms.com](http://www.takeactionfilms.com)) and hopefully we can announce shortly who our U.S. and international broadcasters will be for the film.”

**Q: What’s the target audience for *Chemical*?**

A: “Similar to *Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home*, we feel *Chemical* will appeal to a broad audience, especially those of us who take care of the cleaning in our homes, and all of us who use some sort of commercialized form of personal care product.”

“*Chemical* makes you question the usefulness of the ingredients inside your products and how at the end of the day using these products 24/7 could have an adverse effect on your health. So I concluded, why take the chance and use products full of toxic ingredients when it’s far safer for you and your family to go natural. It does the same job yet it doesn’t hurt you or the environment.”

**Q: Do you show how to make these natural cleaners in the film?**

A: “Yes. As I mentioned earlier, the Goode family made all their own personal cleaning products, and we follow along as they do it, to see how it turns out.”

“We’re also going to be releasing a *Chemical* cookbook. I know it sounds strange, but yes, making cleaning products is kind of like cooking. You add a dash of lemon and some water and vinegar and it’s as simple of making a jug of lemonade, or in the case of making lipstick, like mixing up a batch of caramel or cookies. For example all that’s really in lipstick is wax, oil and natural coloring.”

“The cookbook will be offered with the film, and it’ll show you how to make these products.”

**Q: What’s next for you?**

A: “Hopefully a vacation!”