

COCAINE BEAR DIRECTOR TAPPED TO DIRECT DISNEY BEAR FOR 2025

Elizabeth Banks, director of 2023 hit *Cocaine Bear*, has been recruited by The Walt Disney company to direct *Disney Bear*, based on the true story from this past week, set for an early 2025 release.

Last Monday, a Black Bear made headlines when she was sighted in a tree located in Disney World's Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida. This unlikely visitor resulted in multiple sections of the park being closed off so that authorities could safely catch her.

"We're just extremely glad that nobody got hurt," said Disney World Resort president Jeff Vahle. "Everyone, including the bear, is fine. Since that's established, looking back, it is a pretty goofy situation."

That seems to be the sentiment shared around the Disney offices, making it no wonder why they decided to turn this occurrence into what they do best: delightful and charming entertainment. And who is better suited to helm this project, than one who is responsible for one of 2023's zaniest and most unexpected hits.

"*Cocaine Bear* was a phenomenon," says director Elizabeth Banks. The film made almost \$90 million at the worldwide box office on a \$30-35 million budget, and spawned countless internet memes. "It was one of those movies that everyone was talking about." Banks is also known for her recent break into directing, with films like 2019's *Charlie's Angels*, and 2015's *Pitch Perfect 2*, while also being a prolific actress for well over a decade prior.

"I grew up going to Disney World and watching all the Disney movies over and over again" Banks continues, "and I'm super honored and ecstatic that they came to me for this. It's gonna be so much fun."

Disney Bear will reportedly be a comedy, but more in the light-hearted zone compared to the gruesomeness of *Cocaine Bear*. Casting is to be determined, but production is aiming to begin mid-2024.

Elizabeth Banks

This Massachusetts born actress, director, producer, and writer started her career in the late 90s as an actress, and has since gone on to play iconic roles such as Effie Trinket in the *Hunger Games* franchise, Gail in all three *Pitch Perfect* movies, and Miss Brant in Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* 1-3, while also doing equally iconic voice work in *The Lego Movie* 1 and 2, *Family Guy*, and *Phineas and Ferb*. She has also spent some time in the directors chair, with movies like *Cocaine Bear*, and *Pitch Perfect 2*.

Jeff Vahle

Vahle has worked with The Walt Disney Company for over 30 years. Now serving as the president of Walt Disney World Resort, he oversees tens of thousands of employees, all 4 theme parks, and numerous hotels at the Orlando location. He also holds many other leadership positions within the Disney brand, and is also an active and influential figure in other Central Floridian organizations, such as being on the Board of Trustees for Rollins College in Winter Park

For the past century, Disney has created top of the line products in the form of film, television, gaming, comic books, theme parks, merchandise, and just about any other medium you can imagine. It all started in 1923 with one man, the eponymous Walt Disney, and his humble beginnings owning a small animation studio in Hollywood. He helped create one of the very first animated sound films, with *Steamboat Willie*, which also marked the debut of the icon of the Walt Disney Company, who needs no introduction, Mickey Mouse. From there Disney had numerous successful and iconic films throughout the late 30s and early 40s, like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Bambi*, and *Pinnocchio*, followed by the opening of the first Disney theme park in 1955. Since Walt Disney's passing in 1966, the company has continued to develop animation and live action film and television, and venturing into newer mediums like video games as technology has advanced. Now, The Walt Disney media family includes Marvel Studios, Star Wars and Lucasfilm, FOX, ABC, and more.

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