

Blackberry

I love my Blackberry...even now. I have such fond memories of “thumbing” my emails and texts on that keyboard. Alas, the “Crackberry” is no more and now I use an Android; just not the same experience.

Blackberry tells the story of the rise of the world’s first smartphone from its humble beginning at Research in Motion (RIM) in Waterloo, Ontario. Under the chaotic, but talented guidance of Mike Lazaridis and Douglas (Doug) Fregin with a team of freewheeling techies obsessed with their in-office movie nights, they developed a secure communications device that became the world’s first smartphone.

At a desperate time, Mike and Doug got an offer from Jim Basillie, a ruthless businessman of unparalleled greed and ambition, telling them that he knows how to market this device, who to sell it to, but he wants 50% of the company and he must be CEO. It’s an offer they refused. Initially.

As co-CEOs, Mike Lazaridis, played by Jay Baruchel, and Jim Balsillie, played by Glenn Howerton, give compelling performances in the retelling of the rapid rise of Blackberry to the heights of the cellphone market only to be vanquished by the release of the iPhone. Throughout, co-founder, Doug Fregin, played by Matthew Johnson, maintains his free-spirited engineering approach to innovation even when faced with the prospect of making obscene sums of money during its rise.

What a shame that this intelligent and engaging movie isn’t being shown more widely. Thankfully, there are still outlets for independent films to be viewed and enjoyed by adults.

C. TaBois June 12, 2023