

Abner Benaim Rolls on Ruben Blades Doc (EXCLUSIVE)



NOVEMBER 6, 2015 | 06:36PM PT

COURTESY: ABNER BENAIM

‘Ruben Blades Is Not My Name’ co-produced by Benaim’s Apertura Films and Gema Films in Argentina

John Hopewell (<https://variety.com/author/john-hopewell/>)

International Correspondent

[@john_hopewell](http://twitter.com/@john_hopewell) (http://twitter.com/@john_hopewell)

MAR DEL PLATA: Having addressed one of the best-known events in Panamanian history, [Abner Benaim](http://variety.com/t/abner-benaim/) (<http://variety.com/t/abner-benaim/>)’s Apertura Films and [Gema Juarez Allen](http://variety.com/t/gema-juarez-allen/) (<http://variety.com/t/gema-juarez-allen/>)’s Gema Films are re-teaming to produce a docu-feature about the best-known Panamanian: “[Ruben Blades](http://variety.com/t/ruben-blades/) (<http://variety.com/t/ruben-blades/>) Is Not My Name.”

Benaim, who helmed Panama's 2014 Oscar entry "Invasion," also co-produced by Gema Films, about the 1989 U.S. invasion, is directing.

Turning on the multiple Grammy Award-winning salsa singer/composer, "Ruben Blades Is Not My Name" is currently shooting in New York, will then segue to Panama and other Latin American countries.

"Invasion" took a questioning stance on the competence – plus humanity – of American armed intervention in foreign lands. "Ruben Blades Is Not My Name" turns on a multi-faceted figure who wrote and performed what was then the best-selling salsa album in history, 1978's "Siembra," was educated at Harvard, was and is a political activist, and made a run for Panamanian president in 1994, obtaining 20% of the votes. He has enjoyed a second career as an actor, is currently playing Daniel Salazar in "Fear the Waking Dead"

"The arc of the story is still playing itself out, but it will definitely be related to the history of Latin America in the past 50 years, of which Ruben has been a witness and an active part of," said Benaim.

"We will concentrate on his music and particularly his lyrics and their effect on those who've listened to them, danced to them, thought about them, and were somehow shaped by them."

By way of its format, "Ruben Blades Is Not My Name" will include interviews with Ruben, other musicians and artists, friends and family and will use lots of incredible archive footage from concerts, daily life, politics, films and more," Benaim added, saying that the docu-feature will also shoot Ruben Blades offstage as a man, "as someone who lives a private life also."

"Ruben Blades Is Not My Name" is "a film full of rhythm, music and good stories -with the most remarkable characters. Ruben is a wonderful storyteller, so it will be a very entertaining and moving piece that will travel wherever there are fans of Ruben and beyond," added Juarez Allen.

Panamanian TV station TVN is backing the docu-feature. Producers (<http://variety411.com/us/los-angeles/producers/>) are in talks with co-producers from the U.S. and Latin America and sales agents for worldwide rights, per Benaim.

“Invasion” won both the Mastercard Central America and Caribbean Audience Award and the Best Documentary Audience Award at the 2014 Panama Festival. It also punched a record 50,000 admissions – a record for a documentary – and B.O. earnings of \$217,745 in Panama. “Working again with director Abner Benaim is an enormous pleasure. He’s somebody that always delivers magnificent films that also speak to audiences,” said Juarez Allen, at Buenos Aires-based Gema Films.

Benaim and Juarez Allen won the Berlinale Co-production Market VFF Talent Highlight Pitch Award for Benaim’s upcoming fiction feature, “Biencuidao,” which Apertura, Benaim’s label, and Gema Films will also co-produce.

Want to read more articles like this one? [SUBSCRIBE TO VARIETY TODAY \(http://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/gampad/clk?id=126980977&iu=/3782/Variety_CM/below-tags/ros\)](http://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/gampad/clk?id=126980977&iu=/3782/Variety_CM/below-tags/ros)

(http://popup.taboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytab)

by Taboola (http://popup.taboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytab)

Promoted Links (http://popup.taboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytab)

YOU MAY LIKE

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/james-bond-lost-007-films-alfred-hitchcock-halle-berry-1201624228/>)

Why We Never Saw Alfred Hitchcock's Bond, and Three More Lost 007 Movies

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/james-bond-lost-007-films-alfred-hitchcock-halle-berry-1201624228/>)

(http://cat.ny.us.criteo.com/delivery/ck.php?cppv=1&cpp=6jNjZ3xxWmR4eIzIdC9kQ2RIYThTVZLTHg3bkY5VFNPtUZSeHU4cFEvZmw2YnFQZIFHnJnNIMHlkCgpsUmRBSXY3V25KME8zQ3VDOTRNSIZId0FnVUVyeWpBYUNqcUtJcXVmdDIEYzIQZ3JJTmJnRHB0UDJjanpZV2ZEWkloNXc4RVYxYzZhOUI2S2tGNTRIT3o0dGFInIpkSWFoMUhxQytwc0QvMEcvS1pqNmZWVXIZRzJNN2tBZUFzQ1lzc3ByWWIsZU1xR2V6dXI2ZWRreW0wVHBIZ3F0bnlvcFNvQ3RnVnkrMjQ4R0p1Y1paRHFwNlBSWFBDtBjaEZYb0NuYTIoWHRpMU1OTBaNUxVFRINTYxbXAraS9tdz09fA%3D%3D&maxdest=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chewy.com%2Fcat%2Fiams-premium-pate-savory-salmon%2Fdp%2F44847%3Futm_source%3Dcriteo%26utm_campaign%3Dmfa&utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=referral)

Iams Premium Pate with Salmon & Select Oceanfish Variety Pack ...
\$18.51 - chewy.com

(http://cat.ny.us.criteo.com/delivery/ck.php?cppv=1&cpp=6jNjZ3xxWmR4eIzIdC9kQ2RIYThTVZLTHg3bkY5VFNPtUZSeHU4cFEvZmw2YnFQZIFHnJnNIMHlkCgpsUmRBSXY3V25KME8zQ3VDOTRNSIZId0FnVUVyeWpBYUNqcUtJcXVmdDIEYzIQZ3JJTmJnRHB0UDJjanpZV2ZEWkloNXc4RVYxYzZhOUI2S2tGNTRIT3o0dGFInIpkSWFoMUhxQytwc0QvMEcvS1pqNmZWVXIZRzJNN2tBZUFzQ1lzc3ByWWIsZU1xR2V6dXI2ZWRreW0wVHBIZ3F0bnlvcFNvQ3RnVnkrMjQ4R0p1Y1paRHFwNlBSWFBDtBjaEZYb0NuYTIoWHRpMU1OTBaNUxVFRINTYxbXAraS9tdz09fA%3D%3D&maxdest=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chewy.com%2Fcat%2Fiams-premium-pate-savory-salmon%2Fdp%2F44847%3Futm_source%3Dcriteo%26utm_campaign%3Dmfa&utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=referral)

(http://cat.ny.us.criteo.com/delivery/ck.php?cppv=1&cpp=6jNjZ3xxWmR4eIzIdC9kQ2RIYThTVZLTHg3bkY5VFNPtUZSeHU4cFEvZmw2YnFQZIFHnJnNIMHlkCgpsUmRBSXY3V25KME8zQ3VDOTRNSIZId0FnVUVyeWpBYUNqcUtJcXVmdDIEYzIQZ3JJTmJnRHB0UDJjanpZV2ZEWkloNXc4RVYxYzZhOUI2S2tGNTRIT3o0dGFInIpkSWFoMUhxQytwc0QvMEcvS1pqNmZWVXIZRzJNN2tBZUFzQ1lzc3ByWWIsZU1xR2V6dXI2ZWRreW0wVHBIZ3F0bnlvcFNvQ3RnVnkrMjQ4R0p1Y1paRHFwNlBSWFBDtBjaEZYb0NuYTIoWHRpMU1OTBaNUxVFRINTYxbXAraS9tdz09fA%3D%3D&maxdest=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chewy.com%2Fcat%2Fiams-premium-pate-savory-salmon%2Fdp%2F44847%3Futm_source%3Dcriteo%26utm_campaign%3Dmfa&utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=referral)

VnkrMjQ4R0p1Y1paRHFWNIBSWFBDDTBjaEZYb0NuYtloWHRpMUI1OTBaNUxVFRINTYxbXAraS9tdz09fA%3D%3D&maxdest=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chewy.com%2Fcat%2Fiams-premium-pate-savory-salmon%2Fdp%2F44847%3Futm_source%3Dcriteo%26utm_campaign%3Dmfa&utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=referral)

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/box-office/steve-jobs-flops-1201626243/>)

'Steve Jobs' Bombs: What Went Wrong With the Apple Drama

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/box-office/steve-jobs-flops-1201626243/>)

([http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH)

[utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH)

[variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH))

16 Child Stars Who Grew Up To Be Super Attractive!

WomensForum

([http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH)

[utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH)

[variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH](http://www.womensforum.com/trending/child-stars-grew-up-hot/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=pmc-variety&utm_content=http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.taboolasyndication.com%2Flibtrc%2Fstatic%2Fthumbnails%2F89e8a173690c2f055d5cb1ecf97d9ef9.png&utm_campaign=taboola_CSGH))

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/star-wars-the-force-awakens-international-trailer-3po-new-footage-video-watch-1201635218/>)

Watch: 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' International Trailer is Loaded with New Footage

(<http://variety.com/2015/film/news/star-wars-the-force-awakens-international-trailer-3po-new-footage-video-watch-1201635218/>)

([https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?](https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P)

[esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P](https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P))

Powerful Tool To Pay Off Your Credit Cards

LendingTree

([https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?](https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P)

[esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P](https://www.lendingtree.com/info/brilliant-way-pay-credit-cards?esourceid=6181096&cchannel=display&csource=taboola&cname=PowerfulToolToPayOffYourCreditCards&ccontent=taboolaDesktopSlateBrilliantWayToPayDown_DP3Ato3P))

(http://popuptaboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytaboola&tab

[by Taboola](http://popuptaboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytaboola) (http://popuptaboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=bytaboola)

Promoted Links (http://popuptaboola.com/en/?template=colorbox&taboola_utm_source=pmc-variety&taboola_utm_medium=