

Behold Now, Behemoth: The Mystery of Lake Champlain

An Interview With:
RICHARD ROSSI and KELLY TABOR
Creators of the LUCY AND THE LAKE MONSTER
Book and Movie Series

Interviewed by Alan Doshna

Hollywood, CA — June 16, 2026 — The American “version” of the Loch Ness Monster may appear to be unlikely source material for Pastor/filmmaker/musician Richard Rossi. Even so, “Champ,” the mysterious plesiosaur-like denizen of Lake Champlain on the northeast coast of the United States is the subject of an ongoing, multi-award-winning book and movie series that has been his latest project. The multi-talented Rossi, who is also the human co-star of the first film Lucy and the Lake Monster, and his co-author and fellow cast member Kelly Tabor share with us here the origin and genesis of their version of this unique part of American folklore.

RICHARD ROSSI

Q: Tell us a little about yourself and your work leading up to the Lucy and the Lake Monster Trilogy. You had known your co-author Kelly for some time. With that, how did it all come together in your mind to approach this story?

RR: Prior to making *Lucy and the Lake Monster*, I had written and directed three feature dramatic films. Due to some health issues in which I was facing my mortality, I wanted to do a film for my grandchildren, but I wasn't sure what the story would be.

Another factor, was that I had played the role of Lewis Carroll on stage in a musical in Los Angeles, telling the story of how he was inspired to write *Alice In Wonderland*. So, swirling around in my mind was this desire to do something for children.

David Lynch taught me a little phrase he coined, “Meditate and Create.” In meditation, we go very deep sometimes into the spirit, “deep calleth unto deep,” (Psalm 42:7) and ideas come to us. I was meditating, and a light bulb went off in my head, that Kelly's stories of being a little girl looking for Champ would be a fantastic story that could appeal to people on many levels, a drama for families, children, people interested in cryptozoology, skeptics...

I got quite excited about two characters: Lucy, based on Kelly as a girl, and Papa Jerry, based on Jerry Tabor, her father, who's a salt-of-the-earth, truly good man, and their adventure of looking for Champ on Lake Champlain in their rickety rowboat.

Q: At what point were you motivated to want to do a trilogy of both series, as opposed to just one of each?

RR: I am honored to have been mentored by David Lynch and to have earned my MFA in Screenwriting at the David Lynch School of Cinematic Arts. While I was there David, and another professor, Alex Kustanovich, introduced me to the “Apu Trilogy” of films made in India by Satyajit Ray.

In the first film, the little Indian boy Apu, is a child. In the second film, he’s a teenager and in the third film he’s an adult. This confirmed an instinct I had that Lucy and Papa could be a trilogy of films and follow that same pattern of looking at the same character as a child in the first film, a teenager in the second, and an adult in the third.

Q: You have likened the series to the writing and later film adaptations of C.S. Lewis’s writings such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* in terms of their underlying spiritual principle. What are your thoughts in that way?

RR: I’m a big fan of the works of C.S. Lewis. When I read the Narnia books, I walk deep into the woods, away from everyone, and read the books and imagine the world.

The books work as stories, but they’re also very allegorical. Aslan the lion, who is killed and has his mane ripped out, comes back three days later, an obvious allegory of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

I don’t explain the Champ allegory often, because I like people to come to their own conclusions, but in my mind, Champ is an allegory for God. Lucy has a childlike faith and believes Champ is good. My faith comes from a childlike place within me and I believe God is love with universal, unconditional love and grace for all.

But there are villains who propagate a concept of Champ as a scary monster, and they do this for mercenary reasons. This is my allegory for rigid religion that creates a concept of God as a monster, who’s very punitive and scary, in order to manipulate the masses and use toxic theology as an opium of the people.

Q: You obviously didn’t have a *Jurassic Park* – sized budget. How were you able to raise the money to do the film and how was the production different from your previous films?

RR: It was a huge step of faith for me to go to New York and shoot *Lucy and the Lake Monster*. Cast and crew came from all over the country and we were trusting God would provide. Pastor Ric Lewis, a local minister, was a lifesaver. He let some of our crew sleep in his church and store cameras there.

As a minister, when I preach, I always put a donation in the offering plate before any of the parishioners do, and Kelly and I did this as a labor of love and put our own money into it first. Then, we had generous donors through GoFundMe and others donating to Eternal Grace, our ministry that sponsors our film evangelism work.

Q: Tell us about the film's special effects and whom you had used for them.

RR: I really wanted the special effects to work when Lucy and Papa finally see Champ, because when Kelly and I spoke at schools about our novel, the children were very excited to see the film and to see Champ.

We had such a micro-budget that I spent \$14 on a green sheet to put on the basement church wall in New York at Pastor Ric's church. Then, Kelly said, "We should probably, to be safe, have a second green sheet for coverage."

So, I spend another \$14, tacked up two green sheets. Then, we had a rowboat in front of the green wall with Lucy, (actress Emma Pearson), and me as Papa in the boat. Kelly, Pastor Ric, and other crew members shook the boat as our D.P. Daniel Burke filmed.

I worried about how this would all work out, but some friends of mine in Iran who are special effects wizards were able to take that green screen footage and add Champ into it at the climactic moment in the third act.

Q: You were interviewed by William Shatner on his TV series *The UnXplained* about some drone footage which seemed to capture Champ – or some similar creature – following your boat in an aerial shot. What happened with all of that?

RR: Sometimes you're living the Art Life and plugging along and you end up doing something that is just blessed and things come to you. We weren't pursuing William Shatner or *The UnXplained* at all. A production assistant got in touch with Kelly. They were intrigued with the drone footage that we shot in our film that captured a large creature swimming behind the rowboat that Emma Pearson and I were riding in (as Papa and Lucy).

I live in the Hollywood area, so I was able to drive to their studio and do the interview they requested. William Shatner's team of scientists examined our drone footage in which we inadvertently caught what appears to be Champs swimming behind our rowboat.

Q: What are your thoughts as far as the actual existence of "Champ" or some such like him?

RR: I've been the Doubting Thomas in the writing team and Kelly has been the True Believer. She's always believed in Champ, since she was a little girl, but I've always been one for evidence and not accepting something based strictly on anecdotes.

When Kelly was editing on a big screen and saw the footage of Champ swimming behind the rowboat, she called me up, excited, and I was a little skeptical at first.

I said, "This needs to be submitted to scientific evaluation and peer review." I sent our footage to different scientists. Most of them never responded. The few that got back to me were nice but I wasn't getting the kind of investigation I wanted.

Then, lo and behold, out of the blue, William Shatner's interested! He interviews me, and part of *The UnXplained* show is they have things vetted with their team of scientists. We got our vetting on The History Channel's nickel, and after examining it, they felt it was the most compelling evidence for Champ in history.

They even wrote some conclusions that it was stronger evidence than the famous Sandra Mansi photo from the 1970's because in the Mansi photo there was nothing for scale.

In our footage, our boat is over 11 ft long, 142 inches from the tip of the bow to the stern and 50.5 inches at the widest point, and Champ's swimming behind us, clearly much bigger than the boat.

I figure, if it's good enough for William Shatner and his team of scientists, it's good enough for me. I'm trembling right now as I say it, but it's an awesome thought that the large, beautiful Champ creature was swimming just yards behind me and Emma, as we rowed in our boat.

Q: How would you describe the impact that Champ has had on your own life overall to this point?

RR: Champ has taught me a lot of lessons. When people come to the end of their lives on their deathbeds, they don't regret the adventures they took. They regret the things they didn't do.

It was a huge adventure, a step of faith for me to follow the spiritual guidance I received in meditation to co-write this series of books and films but F.A.I.T.H. can be an acronym for "Fantastic Adventures In Trusting Him." I said yes to fate, and yes to the Champ story I was given through God and Kelly.

I met a whole new town who has showed me so much love and support in the Lake Champlain region. I've made so many friends. Champ changed my life and it's brought a lot of healing to my own heart.

Q: How did you plan to release the film(s) and has it continued along those lines or have there been other developments?

RR: Almost every week, *Lucy and the Lake Monster* is distributed into a new outlet. It's hard to keep up with. Just three days ago, it was released on the YouTube channel of Cinema Epoch and in just three days, over 7,000 people watched the movie.

It's won over thirty awards at film festivals, and the novel has won awards for best children's novel.

The only way to keep up is to go to our website <https://www.lucyandthelakemonster.com> because it's showing in new outlets all the time, all over the world.

Q: You were invited to have the first Lucy film screened at the G-Fan Festival in Chicago in July of this year. How did that come about?

RR: Much like the Shatner interview, they came to us from out of the blue and asked us. Lucy is showing the first two days of G-Fest, and Kelly and I are doing a Q/A after the film.

Q: Any thoughts you would like to share about the upcoming books and movies, including the upcoming movie sequel *Secrets of Lake Champlain*?

RR: Part 2, *The Secrets of Lake Champlain*, is in post-production. In the sequel, Lucy is now 16 years-old. (She was 8 years-old in the first film, played by Emma Pearson) Anastasia Liodori plays Lucy at 16 years-old.

The third film in the series, Lucy's an adult. Part three is written and was done as my thesis script for my MFA degree in Screenwriting at the David Lynch School of Cinematic Arts.

Thank you, Al Doshna, for your acting in part two, and for your support as a producer.

KELLY TABOR

Q: You grew up in Crown Point, New York and were aware of the fascination with the Champ phenomena and were involved with it somewhat yourself. What was your personal experience in that way in the context of your life and was your involvement met with favor or disfavor?

KT: I grew up on Lake Champlain. My father Jerry, (who the character Richard plays in the film, "Papa Jerry," is based on), had a cabin. We spent our summers there.

There were always rumors about different sightings of Champ, so my eyes were always scanning the lake for my own sighting of Champ. I looked with anticipation, hoping that I would see it. In fact, I used to even have dreams of seeing Champ and he would come talk with me as a child when I sat on the rocks by the lake. I was really intrigued by the thought of a lake monster. I never viewed it as being something scary, because it had never been known to hurt anybody who had seen it.

It was something that I internally did, privately, I didn't really speak about it a lot with other people because people who saw it were sometimes mocked. My Uncle Bob owned the bar-restaurant called Captain Blye's on Bulwagga Bay where there were many Champ sightings through the years. When he or other patrons claimed Champ sightings, people would often laugh and say they must have been 'tipping back a few too many' at the bar. Perhaps that could have been true for some accounts, but not all. There were hundreds of other eyewitness accounts from Bulwagga Bay area beaches, boats, campgrounds, vacationers, and residents.

Q: As an award winning fourth-grade teacher, your students were extremely interested in the stories you shared about Champ with them from your experience. Tell us about that.

KT: My fourth-grade students were really excited and intrigued about the thought of a legendary lake monster and they wanted to know all the details, so I would tell stories of growing up looking for Champ and many of the Champ encounters I was aware of from being a local. Lucy in our story is based on me. My students were always on the edge of their seats with wide-eyed anticipation with each story I shared.

Q: Did you find that your students associated Champ with other cinematic dinosaurs such as Godzilla and Jurassic Park, and/or, had a general interest in the subject?

KT: Students love dinosaurs and wondered if Champ could be a species that we thought was extinct?

Richard is a big fan of the Godzilla movies and some of the boys like to ask him who would win in a fight, Godzilla, Champ, or Nessie? He has a good rapport with the boys, and he boxed in his younger years, so sometimes he has fun reenacting a Godzilla/Champ/Nessie boxing match, and discussing with the boys what would happen in an epic Battle Royale of the monsters. Believe me, the girls were just as interested.

Q: What influence on you as a teacher has your sharing those stories with your students as far as how have they shaped you?

KT: All the people who came forward to say that they had seen Champ, are recognized by having their names printed on the famous eyewitness sign in Port Henry, New York, that we show in our film, "Lucy and the Lake Monster." It has the actual dates when they saw the sea creature.

In the past, I used the sighting sign as a springboard for math and science lessons in my classroom. By observing the actual Champ sighting dates, students graphed the sightings by months. The graphs clearly showed that the number of sightings were greater in the summer months than winter months. Students were then encouraged to figure out possible reasons for their graph findings. They hypothesized, "Why were there more sightings in June and July than in December?"

The students then researched the general temperatures, weather, and climate of the Bulwagga Bay area for those months.

They basically analyzed their data and drew conclusions. They learned the lake freezes over in the winter months, so the number of sightings would naturally be lower, if any.

In the end, they concluded and communicated that more people are generally on the lake during the summertime months, so there would be more eyes available for Champ sightings during those warmer months without the hindrance of winter ice blocking Champ from surfacing.

Q: How did the idea for the book, which the movies are based upon, come to you for your part?

KT: Before I retired from teaching, Richard was a popular guest speaker in my classroom and had great rapport with my students. He shared his love of writing, filmmaking, and music. He saw the excitement in my students when they talked about liking my Champ stories. They were thrilled to be among the first to learn that Richard and I were considering working together and writing a children's book and film series about Champ. They would often write to Mr. Rossi, thanking him for being a guest speaker. They loved including hand-drawn colored pictures of Champ. We ended up including some of those letters and drawings in the credits at the end of our first movie, Lucy and the Lake Monster.

Q: What was it like for you when the subject of doing the book and movie series came up between you and Richard?

KT: Richard thought it would be a great idea to have a book and film series and so he asked me if I would consider writing and making the movie series with him about a little girl and her grandpa looking for Champ? I couldn't resist. I just thought it was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Q: Tell us about the significant memorabilia and promotional activity about Champ in the area such as the baseball team and its mascot inspired by Champ.

KT: The Vermont Lake Monsters baseball team mascot, Champ has promoted Lucy and the Lake Monster, which I thought was great.

Champ Day is celebrated annually in Port Henry, New York. There are vendors, games, and activities related to Champ. There are local merchants from the Lake Champlain region selling Champ t-shirts, ceramics, crafts, and jewelry. Richard and I are invited guests each year and have signed copies of Lucy and the Lake Monster book and DVD available for purchase. This year, the annual Champ Day is scheduled for August 1st.

Q: How would you compare and contrast your current perspective with your early life experiences in learning about him and the extreme interest in Champ, since having co-written the book and worked on the movies?

KT: I'm sharing the joy that I had as a child with thousands of children around the world on a whole new level. It's not just children, but people of all ages internationally. It's making Champ even more known on a larger scale. There's a line in our film in which someone calls Champ "America's Loch Ness," and Lucy jokes that she's making Champ more famous, so one day they'll call Nessie "Scotland's Champ."

Q: Young people who have read the book and have seen the movie have been extremely interested and excited about them. Tell us about that and your reaction towards it?

KT: Seeing young people come up to us excited about Lucy and the Lake Monster excites me, that Champ is becoming more well-known.

Nessie is the most well-known cryptid sea creature on the planet, but the enthusiastic young people are helping his cousin Champie rank right up there.

Q: What are your thoughts about the real Champ? Do you think we will find out all about him at some point or is best that he maintain his privacy and that he remains a secret?

KT: I think it's nice that there is still some mystique to Champ. He's a legend. As a spiritual allegory, Romans 11:33 says, "*Oh, the depths of the infinite mysteries are unsearchable and inscrutable...*"

Q: Any parting comments about your relationship to Champ?

KT: I believe that there's not just one. Lake Champlain is much bigger and deeper than Loch Ness, with caves and caverns, so it's got more sustainable food to allow it to procreate as a replicating species.

In the Burlington, Vermont, area people have seen several surface at a time. Perhaps, it's able to survive the cold winter months in the underwater caves.

In closing, Richard and I want to thank the townspeople in the Lake Champlain region for their support. People like Mark and Alita Desso, and Rick Hludzinski for letting us shoot at their lake cabin properties. Thanks to the talented cast and crew who came from all over. Funding three movies is costly. A special thanks goes out to all past, present, and future donors. Your generosity and kindness is greatly appreciated.

For more information about, Lucy and the Lake Monster, visit the Official website below: <https://www.lucyandthelakemonster.com>

The footage mentioned above shows Champ swimming on the bottom right of the screen behind a rowboat with the two lead actors in it, Richard Rossi and Emma Pearson. The rowboat is 11 feet long and Champ is bigger than the boat. Ten seconds on the footage can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkpzfqIt3PI>

Filmmakers Richard Rossi and Kelly Tabor, whose groundbreaking drone footage has now garnered global attention, are available for interviews to discuss their capturing the footage, the upcoming sequel film their making "*The Secrets of Lake Champlain*," and their ongoing quest to uncover the truth behind Champ.

****Media Interested in Exclusive Interviews with Richard Rossi and Kelly Tabor are encouraged to contact: richardrossilive@gmail.com - (818) 221-5899**

This revelation marks a significant milestone in the ongoing quest to prove the existence of one of North America's most enduring mysteries. Don't miss the chance to speak with the filmmakers behind this extraordinary footage and learn more about their groundbreaking work.

About Richard Rossi and Kelly Tabor

Richard Rossi and Kelly Tabor are independent filmmakers dedicated to their book and film series "*Lucy and the Lake Monster*" which supports their exploring and documenting cryptozoological phenomena. Their drone footage of Champ aims to shed light on one of North America's most enduring legends.

Kelly is a native of Crown Point, New York where she searched for Champ on Lake Champlain. She was a public school teacher in South Carolina for 32 years, where she regaled her students with tales of Champ the Lake Monster.

Richard Rossi is an Academy Award-considered Hollywood filmmaker whose prior films include biopics of baseball icon Roberto Clemente, fabled female faith healer Aimee Semple McPherson, and a modern Elmer Gantry-ish story, *Canaan Land*.

Rossi and Tabor are lifelong friends and co-wrote the *Lucy and the Lake Monster* book and film trilogy together.

Press Contact:

Richard Rossi

Writer-Director

(818) 221-5899

richardrossi@lucyandthelakemonster.com

LUCY AND THE LAKE MONSTER is a feature dramatic film and book series about a 9 year-old orphan girl and her grandpa searching for a sea serpent in Lake Champlain. They battle bullies, naysayers, and mercenary forces seeking to exploit them. Their search is an allegory for humanity's spiritual search.

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