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J. J. Abrams

Jeffrey Jacob Abrams (born June 27, 1966)^[1] is an American filmmaker and composer. He is best known for his works in the genres of action, drama, and science fiction. Abrams wrote and produced such films as Regarding Henry (1991), Forever Young (1992), Armageddon (1998), Cloverfield (2008), Star Trek (2009), Star Wars: The Force Awakens (2015), and Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (2019).

Abrams has created numerous television series, including *Felicity* (co-creator, 1998–2002), *Alias* (creator, 2001–2006), Lost (co-creator, 2004–2010), and Fringe (co-creator, 2008–2013). He won two Emmy Awards for Lost - Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series and Outstanding Drama Series.

His directorial film work includes Mission: Impossible III (2006), Star Trek (2009), Super 8 (2011), and Star Trek Into Darkness (2013). He also directed, produced and co-wrote The Force Awakens, the seventh episode of the Star Wars saga and the first film of the sequel trilogy. The film is his highest-grossing, as well as the fourth-highest-grossing film of all time not adjusted for inflation. He returned to Star Wars by executive producing The Last Jedi (2017), and directing and co-writing The Rise of Skywalker (2019).[2]

Abrams's frequent collaborators include producer Bryan Burk, producer/director Tommy Gormley, actors Greg Grunberg, Simon Pegg, Amanda Foreman, and Keri Russell, composer Michael Giacchino, writers Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci, cinematographers Daniel Mindel and Larry Fong, and editors Maryann Brandon and Mary Jo Markey.

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Abrams at the 2015 San Diego Comic-

Con Jeffrey Jacob Abrams

June 27, 1966 New York City, New

York, U.S.

Education Palisades Charter High

School

Born

Alma mater Sarah Lawrence College

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Occupation	Film director · film producer · screenwriter · composer
Years active	1982-present
Spouse	Katie McGrath (m. 1996)
Children	3, including Gracie
Parents	Gerald W. Abrams (father) Carol Ann Kelvin (mother)

Early life

External links

Abrams was born in New York City with the name Jeffrey Jacob Abrams to veteran television producer Gerald W. Abrams (born 1939) of Polish-Jewish descent and Carol Ann Abrams (née Kelvin; 1942–2012) a Peabody Award winning television executive producer, as well as an author and law academic. His sister is screenwriter Tracy Rosen. His father had just begun his career in television, working at CBS's flagship television station in Midtown Manhattan the year prior to Abrams' birth. By 1971, his father had worked his way up at CBS and the family had relocated to Los Angeles. His mother worked as a real estate agent while Abrams and his sister were at school. [3]

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Abrams attended <u>Palisades High School</u> and after graduation, Abrams planned on going to art school rather than a traditional college, but eventually enrolled at <u>Sarah Lawrence College</u>, in <u>Bronxville</u>, New York, following his father's advice: "it's more important that you go off and learn what to make movies about than how to make movies."

[4]

Film career

Early career

Abrams' first job in the movie business was at age 16 when he wrote the music for <u>Don Dohler</u>'s 1982 horror movie <u>Nightbeast</u>. During his senior year at college, he teamed with Jill Mazursky, the daughter of award-winning writer/director, <u>Paul Mazursky</u> to write a feature film treatment. [5][6] Purchased by <u>Touchstone Pictures</u>, the treatment was the basis for <u>Taking Care of Business</u>, Abrams' first produced film, which starred <u>Charles Grodin</u> and <u>James Belushi</u> and was directed by <u>Academy Award</u> winner <u>Arthur Hiller</u>. He followed with <u>Regarding Henry</u>, starring <u>Harrison Ford</u>, and <u>Forever Young</u>, starring <u>Mel Gibson</u>. He also co-wrote with Mazursky the script for the comedy <u>Gone Fishin</u>' starring <u>Joe Pesci and Danny Glover</u>.

In 1994, he was part of the "Propellerheads" with Rob Letterman, Loren Soman, and Andy Waisler, a group of Sarah Lawrence alums experimenting with computer animation technology. They were contracted by Jeffrey Katzenberg to develop animation for the film Shrek. Abrams worked on the screenplay for the 1998 film Armageddon with producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Michael Bay. That same year, he made his first foray into television with Felicity, which ran for four seasons on The WB Network, serving as the series' co-creator (with Matt Reeves) and executive producer. He also composed its opening theme music.

2000s

Under his production company, <u>Bad Robot</u>, which he founded with <u>Bryan Burk</u> in 2001, [8] Abrams created and executive-produced <u>ABC's Alias</u> and is co-creator (along with <u>Damon Lindelof</u> and <u>Jeffrey Lieber</u>) and was executive producer of <u>Lost</u>. As with <u>Felicity</u>, Abrams also composed the opening <u>theme music</u> for <u>Alias</u> and <u>Lost</u>. Abrams directed and wrote the two-part pilot for <u>Lost</u> and remained active producer for the first half of the season. Also in 2001, Abrams co-wrote and produced the horror-thriller <u>Joy Ride</u>. [9] In 2006, he served as executive producer of <u>What About Brian</u> and <u>Six Degrees</u>, also on ABC. He also co-wrote the teleplay for <u>Lost's</u> third-season premiere "<u>A Tale of Two Cities"</u> and the same year, he made his feature directorial debut with <u>Mission: Impossible III</u>, starring Tom Cruise. Abrams spoke at the TED conference in 2007. [10]

In 2008, Abrams produced the monster movie <u>Cloverfield</u>, which Matt Reeves directed. In 2009, he directed the science fiction film <u>Star Trek</u>, which he produced with <u>Lost co-creator Damon Lindelof</u>. While it was speculated that they would be writing and producing an adaptation of <u>Stephen King's The Dark Tower</u> series of novels, they publicly stated in November 2009 that they were no longer looking to take on that project. In 2008, Abrams co-created, executive produced, and co-wrote (along with <u>Roberto Orci</u> and Alex Kurtzman) the FOX science fiction series <u>Fringe</u>, for which he also composed the theme music. He was featured in the 2009 MTV

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Movie Awards 1980s-style digital short "Cool Guys Don't Look at Explosions", with Andy Samberg and Will Ferrell, in which he plays a keyboard solo. NBC picked up Abrams's *Undercovers* as its first new drama series for the 2010–11 season. [14] However, it was subsequently cancelled by the network in November 2010.

2010s

Abrams wrote and directed the <u>Paramount</u> science fiction thriller <u>Super 8</u>, starring <u>Joel Courtney</u> and <u>Elle Fanning</u>, while co-producing with <u>Steven Spielberg</u> and <u>Bryan Burk</u>; it was released on <u>June 10, 2011. [15]</u>

Abrams directed the sequel to *Star Trek*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, released in May 2013. The film was interpreted as a loose remake of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Critics generally reacted positively to the film, while Nicholas Meyer, the director of *The Wrath of Khan*, called it a "gimmick". Abrams was criticized for the film's treatment of classic villain Khan Noonien Singh (Benedict Cumberbatch). Many felt that much of the character, originally played by Mexican actor Ricardo Montalban, had been lost, especially his ethnic identity. Two years after the film's release, Abrams said of the film, "there were certain things I was unsure of. ... Any movie ... has a fundamental conversation happening during it. And [for *Into Darkness*,] I didn't have it... [The weakness of the plot] was not anyone's fault but mine. ... [The script] was a little bit of a collection of scenes that were written by my friends ... And yet, I found myself frustrated by my choices, and unable to hang my hat on an undeniable thread of the main story. So then I found myself on that movie basically tap-dancing as well as I could to try and make the sequences as entertaining as possible. ... I would never say that I don't think that the movie ended up working. But I feel like it didn't work as well as it could have, had I made some better decisions before we started shooting."[20]

On January 25, 2013, <u>The Walt Disney Studios</u> and <u>Lucasfilm</u> officially announced Abrams as director and producer of <u>Star Wars: The Force Awakens</u>, the seventh entry in the <u>Star Wars</u> film saga. [21] It was also announced that Bryan Burk and Bad Robot Productions would produce the



Abrams at the 2010 <u>Time 100 Gala</u> in Manhattan



Abrams speaking at <u>San Diego</u> Comic-Con International in 2010

feature. Following the news that he would direct *The Force Awakens*, speculation arose as to Abrams's future with Paramount Pictures, under which he had released all of his previous feature work as a director, and which had a first-look deal with his company, Bad Robot Productions. Paramount vice-chairman Rob Moore stated that Abrams would continue to have a hand in the *Star Trek* and *Mission: Impossible* franchises going forward. [23]

Abrams directed, produced, and co-wrote the screenplay for *The Force Awakens*, [24] which opened in theaters on December 18, 2015, and grossed over \$2 billion at the box office, making Abrams the first director of a \$2 billion movie since James Cameron. [25][26] Despite its strong box office performance and positive reviews, the film was considered by some, including *Star Wars* creator George Lucas, to be too similar to the original 1977 film. [27][28] In 2016, Abrams responded towards these complaints, stating: "What was important for me was introducing brand new characters using relationships that were embracing the history that we know to tell a story that is new — to go backwards to go forwards". [29][b]

Abrams returned as producer for <u>Star Trek Beyond</u>, released in 2016. And also produced <u>The Cloverfield Paradox</u>, a sequel to <u>10</u> <u>Cloverfield Lane</u>. It was released on <u>Netflix</u> in February 2018. [31][32] Also on 2018, Abrams produced <u>Overlord</u>, a horror film set behind German enemy lines in <u>World War II</u> and directed by <u>Julius Avery</u>. [33] Abrams also produced the fourth, fifth, and sixth <u>Mission</u>: <u>Impossible</u> films. [34]

In September 2017, it was announced by Lucasfilm's president, <u>Kathleen Kennedy</u>, that Abrams would be returning to direct and cowrite <u>Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker</u> with <u>Chris Terrio</u>. The film was released in December 2019; it received mixed reviews from critics and fans, [36][37] while audience reactions leaned more positively. [38][39]

Upcoming projects

In 2008, it was reported that Abrams purchased the rights to a <u>New York Times</u> article "Mystery on Fifth Avenue" about the renovation of an 8.5 million dollar co-op, a division of property originally owned by E. F. Hutton & Co. and Marjorie Merriweather Post, for six figures and was developing a film titled *Mystery on Fifth Avenue*, with Paramount Pictures and Bad Robot Productions, and comedy writers Maya Forbes and <u>Wally Wolodarsky</u> to write the adaptation. According to the article, a wealthy couple Steven B. Klinsky and Maureen Sherry purchased the apartment in 2003 and live there with their four children. Soon after purchasing the apartment, they hired young architectural designer <u>Eric Clough</u>, who devised an elaborately clever "scavenger hunt" built into the apartment that involved dozens of historical figures, a fictional book and a soundtrack, woven throughout the apartment in puzzles, riddles, secret panels, compartments, and hidden codes, without the couple's knowledge. The family didn't discover the embedded mystery until months after moving into the apartment. [41][42] After Abrams purchased the article, Clough left him an encrypted message in the wall tiles of a Christian Louboutin shoe store he designed in West Hollywood. [43]

In July 2016, Abrams reported that a fourth alternate universe *Star Trek* installment was in the works and that he is confident that Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto and Chris Hemsworth will return for the sequel. [44][45]

In May 2018, Abrams and Avery had reunited to produce and direct, respectively, a superhero thriller film titled *The Heavy*, with a script written by Daniel Casey. Paramount and Bad Robot plan to begin filming sometime in 2018. [46]

Abrams will produce and <u>Guillermo del Toro</u> will write and direct a science-fiction action/thriller film titled <u>Zanbato</u>, which Abrams has been working on since 2011. 48

In September 2019, Abrams and his Bad Robot Productions company signed a \$250 million five-year deal with WarnerMedia, including HBO and Warner Bros. Pictures. [49] In April 2020, it was announced that Abrams would be developing three new shows for HBO Max: Justice League Dark, Overlook, and Duster. [50] Abrams will also serve as executive producer and co-creator of a new Batman animated series titled Batman: Caped Crusader alongside Reeves and Bruce Timm. [51]

In June 2022, it was announced that Abrams would be one of the producers of an animated short film of <u>The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and</u> the Horse, which will air on BBC One and BBC iPlayer at Christmas 2022. [52]

Unrealized projects

In 1989, Abrams met Steven Spielberg at a film festival, where Spielberg spoke about a possible Who Framed Roger Rabbit sequel, with Abrams as a possible writer and with Robert Zemeckis as producer. Nothing came up from this project, although Abrams has some storyboards for a Roger Rabbit short. 53

In July 2002, Abrams wrote a script for a possible fifth <u>Superman</u> film entitled <u>Superman</u>: <u>Flyby</u>. [54] <u>Brett Ratner</u> and <u>McG</u> entered into talks to direct, [55] although Abrams tried to get the chance to direct his own script. [56] However, the project was finally cancelled in 2004 and instead <u>Superman Returns</u> was released in 2006.

In November 2009, it was reported that Abrams and Bad Robot Productions were producing, along with Cartoon Network Movies, Warner Bros., Frederator Films and Paramount Pictures, a film adaptation of Samurai Jack. [57] However, in June 2012, series creator Genndy Tartakovsky stated that the production of the film was scrapped after Abrams' departure from the project to direct Star Trek. [58] For this and other reasons, Tartakovsky decided to make a new season instead of a feature film. Also in 2009, it was reported that Abrams and Bad Robot Productions would produce a film based on the Micronauts toy line. [59][60] However, a film has never gone into production. [61]

In February 2018, HBO ordered Abrams' sci-fi drama *Demimonde* to series. [62] In June 2022, it was announced the project would no longer be moving forward. [63]

Bad Robot

In 2001, Abrams founded his own production company <u>Bad Robot Productions</u> in association with <u>Paramount Pictures</u> and <u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u>. The company is well known for the <u>Star Trek film reboot franchise</u>, the <u>Cloverfield franchise</u>, and the <u>Star Wars sequel trilogy</u>. In early 2021, it was announced that Abrams and <u>Bad Robot Productions</u> will produce several films and television series based on members of the <u>DC Comics superhero team Justice League Dark</u> in similar fashion to how <u>Marvel Comics</u> released individual television series based on members of <u>The Defenders until their team up miniseries</u>. It was also announced Abrams would produce a reboot of the <u>Superman movie franchise</u>.

Other work

Video game

In November 2015, it was announced that Abrams was developing a video game called *Spyjinx*, in a collaboration between Bad Robot Productions and Chair Entertainment. [65][66]

Books and comics

On September 9, 2013, it was announced that Abrams would release a novel, \underline{S} , written by $\underline{\text{Doug Dorst}}$. The book was released on October 29, 2013. [67]

In 2019, Abrams made his debut as a writer for <u>Marvel Comics</u>, co-authoring the company's title <u>Spider-Man</u> from September of that year with his son Henry. [68] The first issue of the comic includes the death of <u>Mary-Jane Watson</u>, and a twelve-year time shift, with the series' protagonist being Ben Parker, son of Peter Parker and Mary Jane. [69]

Personal life

Abrams is married to public relations executive Katie McGrath and has three children. His daughter, Gracie Abrams, is a pop singer-songwriter. He resides in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles, California. He is Jewish and his wife is Catholic, and he sometimes takes his children to religious services on Jewish holidays.

Abrams serves on the Creative Council of Represent.Us, a <u>nonpartisan</u> anti-corruption organization and the <u>Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF) Board of Governors. $\overline{[76]}$ </u>

Filmography

Film

Vaar	Title	Credited as		i	Notes	
Year	ritie	Director	Writer	Producer	Notes	
1990	Taking Care of Business	No	Yes	No	Co-written with Jill Mazursky	
1991	Regarding Henry	No	Yes	Co- Producer		
1992	Forever Young	No	Yes	Executive		
1997	Gone Fishin'	No	Yes	No	Co-written with Jill Mazursky	
1998	Armageddon	No	Yes	No	Story written by Robert Roy Pool and Jonathan Hensleigh Adaptation by Tony Gilroy and Shane Salerno Screenplay co-written with Hensleigh	
2001	Joy Ride	No	Yes	Yes	Co-written with Clay Tarver	
2006	Mission: Impossible III	Yes	Yes	No	Directorial debut; co-written with Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci	
2009	Star Trek	Yes	No	Yes		
2011	Super 8	Yes	Yes	Yes		
2013	Star Trek Into Darkness	Yes	No	Yes		
2015	Star Wars: The Force Awakens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Co-written with Lawrence Kasdan and Michael Arndt	
2019	Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker	Yes	Yes	Yes	Story co-written with Derek Connolly & Colin Trevorrow and Chris Terrio Screenplay co-written with Terrio	

Producer only

- The Pallbearer (1996)
- The Suburbans (1999)
- Cloverfield (2008)
- Morning Glory (2010)
- Mission: Impossible Ghost Protocol (2011)
- Mission: Impossible Rogue Nation (2015)
- 10 Cloverfield Lane (2016)
- Star Trek Beyond (2016)
- The Cloverfield Paradox (2018)
- Mission: Impossible Fallout (2018)
- Overlord (2018)

Executive producer

- Infinitely Polar Bear (2014)
- Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017)

■ Star Trek 4 (2023)

Acting credits

Year	Title	Role
1991	Regarding Henry	Delivery Boy
1993	Six Degrees of Separation	Doug
1996	Diabolique	Video Photographer #2
1999	The Suburbans	Rock Journalist
2015	Star Wars: The Force Awakens	Vocal cameo
2017	The Disaster Artist	Himself
2019	Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker	D-O (voice)

Other roles

Year	Title	Role
1982	Nightbeast	Composer / Sound effects composer
1995	Casper	Uncredited rewrites[77]
2006	Mission: Impossible III	Digital artist
2019	Love, Antosha	Documentary film; appears as himself

Television

	Title			Credited as			
Year		Creator	Director	Writer	Executive Producer	Theme Composer	Notes
1998–2002	Felicity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director (2 episodes) / Writer (17 episodes)
2001–06	Alias	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director (3 episodes) / Writer (13 episodes)
2004–10	Lost	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director (2 episodes) / Writer (3 episodes)
2006	Jimmy Kimmel Live!	No	Yes	No	No	No	Episode: "4.269"
2007	The Office	No	Yes	No	No	No	Episode: "Cocktails"
2008–13	Fringe	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Writer (6 episodes)
2010	Undercovers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director (1 episode) / Writer (3 episodes)
2011–16	Person of Interest	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
2012	Alcatraz	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
2012–14	Revolution	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
2013–14	Almost Human	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
TBA	Duster	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	

Executive producer only

- What About Brian (2006–07)
- Six Degrees (2006–07)
- Believe (2014)
- 11.22.63 (2016) (Miniseries^[78])
- Roadies (2016)
- Westworld (2016–present)
- Castle Rock (2018–19)
- Little Voice (2020)
- Lovecraft Country (2020)
- Challenger: The Final Flight (2020)
- Lisey's Story (2021) (Miniseries)
- UFO (2021)
- My Glory Was I Had Such Friends (TBA) (Miniseries)
- Overlook (TBA)

Justice League Dark (TBA)

Acting credits

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2012	Family Guy		Voice; Episode: "Ratings Guy"
0047	Nightcap	Himself	Episode: "The Show Might Go on, Part 2"
2017	Tour de Pharmacy		Television film
2021	The Simpsons		Episode: "Do Pizza Bots Dream of Electric Guitars"

Theatre

Year Title			Credited as	Notes	
rear	riue	Director	Writer	Producer	Notes
2017	The Play That Goes Wrong	No	No	Yes	Broadway version

Bibliography

• S. (with Doug Dorst, 2013)

Awards and nominations

Year	Award	Category	Nominated work	Result
1999	Razzie Award	Worst Screenplay	Armageddon	Nominated
2002	Emmy Award ^[79]	Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series	Alica	Nominated
2004	PGA Award	Best Drama	Alias	Nominated
	ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards	Top TV Series		Won
	Directors Guild of America	Best Director	est Director	Nominated
2005		Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series – Pilot		Won
	Emmy Award ^[79]	Outstanding Drama Series ^[79]		Won
		Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series – Pilot ^[79]	Lost	Nominated
	ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards	Top TV Series	+	Won
2006	PGA Award	Best Drama	*	Won
	Writers Guild of America ^[80]	Dramatic Series		Won
	Saturn Award	Best Director	Mission: Impossible III	Nominated
2002 2004 2005 2006	BAFTA	Best International Programme		Nominated
2007	PGA Award	Best Drama		Nominated
	Writers Guild of America	Dramatic Series	Lost	Nominated
2008	Emmy Award	Outstanding Drama Series		Nominated
	Emmy Award	Outstanding Drama Series		Nominated
2000	Writers Guild of America	Long Form	Fringe	Nominated
2009	Willers Guild Of Affielica	New Series	Tringe	Nominated
	Scream Awards	Best Director		Won
	Saturn Award	Best Director		Nominated
	Empire Awards	Best Director	Star Trek	Nominated
2010	PGA Award	Theatrical Motion Picture	Star Trek	Nominated
2010	SFX Awards	Best Director		Won
	Hugo Awards	Best Dramatic Presentation - Long Form		Nominated
	Emmy Award ^[79]	Outstanding Drama Series	Lost	Nominated
2011	Scream Award	Best Director	Super 8	Nominated

Year	Award	Category	Nominated work	Result
		Best Scream-Play		Won
	DAM Awarda	Best Director		Nominated
	BAM Awards	Best Screenplay		Won
	Catura Award	Best Director		Won
2012	Saturn Award	Best Writing		Nominated
	SFX Awards	Best Director		Nominated
2013	PGA Award	Norman Lear Achievement Award in Television		Won
2014		Doct Disaster	Star Trek Into Darkness Star Wars: The Force Awaken	Nominated
	Saturn Award	Best Director		Nominated
		Best Writing		Won
	Empire Awards	Best Director		Won
2016		Best Sci-Fi/Fantasy Film		Won
2016		Best Film	Star wars: The Force Awakens	Nominated
	Critics' Choice Movie Awards	Best Picture		Nominated
	Jupiter Awards	Best International Film		Won
	Hugo Awards	Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form		Nominated

See also

Saturn Award for Best Director

Notes

- a. Khan is an explicitly non-white character in the <u>Star Trek canon</u>, introduced as a <u>Sikh</u> and former ruler of much of eastern Eurasia. [19]
- b. In 2017, Abrams said he would not do more remakes or reboots, to instead focus on his own creations, saying: "You know, I do think that if you're telling a story that is not moving anything forward, not introducing anything that's relevant, that's not creating a new mythology or an extension of it, then a complete remake of something feels like a mistake."

 [30]

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Further reading

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External links

- J. J. Abrams (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0009190/) at IMDb
- J. J. Abrams (https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/362016%7C0/wp) at the TCM Movie Database
- J. J. Abrams (https://www.allmovie.com/artist/p240910) at AllMovie
- J. J. Abrams (https://www.ted.com/speakers/j j abrams) at TED
- J. J. Abrams (https://charlierose.com/guests/7539) on Charlie Rose
- Works by or about J. J. Abrams (https://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-no98124254) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
- J. J. Abrams (http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/j_j_abrams/index.html) collected news and commentary at The New York Times

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