

LA Made: The Barbie Tapes

A Toy is Born

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[The Barbie Tapes: A Toy is Born - LA Made: The Barbie Tapes - Omny.fm](#)

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** On a surprisingly brisk April morning, I walked into a vintage industrial building in the Chic Los Angeles Arts District. I went past the doorman up in the elevator and rang the doorbell.

**M.G. LORD:** Thank you for coming, let's get started.

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Inside of the apartment awaited a treasure that I knew was going to unlock the origin story of a national icon. The person whose loft I was standing in is someone who LAist listeners are already probably pretty familiar with - the fabulous M.G. Lord, cultural critic USC professor and host of LA Made season one: Blood Sweat and Rockets

**M.G. LORD:** I haven't touched these things since 1994 as you could probably tell.

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** I met M.G. five years ago when I was a producer on NPR's Latino USA. She was a source and immediately it was a meeting of the minds. We were two cat ladies obsessed with the intersection between feminism and pop culture.

**AUDIO CLIP [M.G. LORD]:** Oh look who's sneaking out.

**AUDIO CLIP [ANTONIA CERREIJO]:** Hi, gorgeous cat

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** This was my first time in M.G.'s place and looking around it was exactly what you want a cultural archaeologist of source's home to look like: tall ceilings with vertical windows that let in an amber light, multiple desks for researching and writing, books crammed into every nook and cranny, and at the center of the room M.G. directed me to a box

**M.G. LORD:** It's, it's you know it's a locked fireproof box, and my friend Vanessa found the safe cracker. Oh my God and you know and walking a locksmith and a safe cracker

**ANTONIA CERELJIDO:** And in the box - audio tapes. Dozens of them. It's been 30 years since M.G. has dusted off the box of tape

**M.G. LORD:** I've been so busy; I hadn't really had a chance to open it. I just opened it last night

**ANTONIA CERELJIDO:** These were never before heard recordings M.G. made while researching a book she published in the 90s. It was *the* book on Barbie - *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll*.

**AUDIO CLIP 1:** Barbie could never have been designed by anyone but me

**AUDIO CLIP 2:** What can we do to make her look classy, instead of cheap looking? Our marketing people.. We're scared to put out a doll with nipples

**AUDIO CLIP 3:** After I looked at her for a while, she became very real to me and I think she's real to the children who play with her

**AUDIO CLIP 4:** It just hit the country like a star

**M.G. LORD:** I have this reproduction of the actual page in the New York Times where the review of *Forever Barbie* appeared when it came out. Oh and that in the corner by the way, is the - the original Barbie's car. This stall - you push her arm back like that and she sprouts breasts and grows quarter of an inch

[Music]

**ANTONIA CERELJIDO:** I think what's so wild is that you played with Barbies and I played with Barbies, and interestingly neither you nor I are what you would assume a kid who loved

Barbie would be like. Nor did we particularly go crazy over Barbie I think

**M.G. LORD:** Even as a child, I found her disturbing yet fascinating

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Yes, exactly. And I think that's actually - that is exactly the point of view of this whole podcast, is that this whole thing is disturbing yet fascinating

**M.G. LORD:** Right, I kind of like the Kens

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Yeah I don't remember the Kens. I had a Barbie CD-ROM game that I loved, and no and my parents were liberal parents who raised their kid to work for National Public Radio and they were horrified at me playing with Barbies

**M.G. LORD:** My mother tried to get ahead of it all by you know, giving me the one that seemed less icky to her. Midge: the kind of wholesome sidekick with freckles painted on her face, sort of the The Peppermint Patty with a Barbie body but I didn't like Midge

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** And the other thing that is so wild: other toys like Chatty Kathy or Betsy Wetsy, all of those toys that were like the toy of the year, nobody knows them now they don't even exist anymore

**M.G. LORD:** Barbie endured. She's the one with staying power. She just hangs in there, and the rest of them fall away. She's a cultural touchstone

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Why do you think she's had staying power over the rest?

**M.G. LORD:** I think there are a whole bunch of reasons. I mean, I bet a marketing person would say it's brand recognition. Someone else might say that it's - it's because of the way that Barbie both shapes and reflects the marketplace. Increasingly you see this with all the different varieties of Barbie, and there's also a kind of mythic resonance that she has. She's kind of the

feminine essence, she's like a goddess archetype, a space age recasting of a stone age fertility totem

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** The idea that sort of led to Barbie even coming into being as we'll explore in this amazing podcast, are things that are still extremely relevant, like the same propulsive force that made her big in 1959 in terms of just how people are re-examining what it means to be a woman. Those questions keep being unearthed and talked about, and Barbie morphs along with all those conversations

**M.G. LORD:** Barbie was a toy that was created by women for women to teach women what "for better or worse" was expected of them. I mean I thought this phenomenon would last and it has - it's 2023 and we're talking -

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Yeah, we're still talking about it

**M.G. LORD:** Yeah, we're hosting the show because this - you know an incredibly cool hip young director has decided that this is Barbie's moment

**[AUDIO CLIP: BARBIE THE MOVIE PREVIEW]:** Hey Barbie! Hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** That is Greta Gerwig's much anticipated Barbie movie

**M.G. LORD:** We want to know what it was like in Barbie's very first moment. There have been ups, there have been downs. And clearly this is a decade of Barbie ascendancy

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** I mean Barbie continues to be the queen of the Toy Market. We dug up some facts just to measure how popular she still is. And worldwide, according to Mattel - more than 100 Barbie dolls are sold every minute. She's the best-selling fashion doll in the world and Barbie has a 99% name recognition internationally. Over the next three episodes, we'll hear the Barbie story from those who lived it

**M.G. LORD:** We'll learn about the innovative marketing strategies aimed at convincing reluctant parents that Barbie would help their rough little girls learn how to be attractive to future husbands...

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** How Mattel adapted when Barbie became a lightning rod for outrage...

**M.G. LORD:** And how Mattel tried sometimes unsuccessfully to keep Barbie relevant...

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** And we'll hear why her inventors' vision for what Barbie could be included almost everything except a husband and kids

**M.G. LORD:** Because Barbie has always been more than a toy. As the movie tagline says: ***she's everything.***

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** I'm Antonia Cereiido

**M.G. LORD:** And I'm M.G. Lord

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** And this is LA made: The Barbie Tapes

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** So this first episode will be about how Barbie was conceived and that takes us right to Ruth Handler

**M.G. LORD:** Ruth Handler who invented the doll, was a great rise fall/redemption story, a classic Hollywood story

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** What do you mean by that?

**M.G. LORD:** Ruth started Mattel and created Barbie, yet due to financial irregularities she was forced out of the company. She nevertheless went on to have a really amazing second career. We'll get to that later

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** So do you remember your first meeting with Ruth?

**M.G. LORD:** I first met Ruth at the Hillcrest Country Club across from their penthouse in Century City

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Do you remember what she was wearing?

**M.G. LORD:** Ruth was wearing what Ruth often wore. She was wearing a tracksuit and - and in fact, on the two occasions when I met her she was wearing a different, like velour, you know. There's like the - I - you think of them in the early around 2000. Those juicy ones

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Yeah, she was wearing something like that?

**M.G. LORD:** Yeah, oh my God, and it was a little, yeah and sneakers. We had a really fun lunch and she narrated her life to me a little bit. And I guess she didn't find me daunting, so she invited me across the street to look through family albums

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** Yeah, and here we are - this is the factory magic young woman in there

**M.G. LORD:** Antonia, Elliott her husband was also part of this conversation and right away he got to the heart of the matter

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLIOTT HANDLER:** You know, it was a different time - he's gonna buy a doll with breasts

**M.G. LORD:** For the next several hours over dinner...

**AUDIO CLIP: M.G. LORD:** I actually, to be honest Ruth, I don't really eat meat.

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** This is fish

**M.G. LORD:** And with some marital fact checking...

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLIOTT HANDLER:** I remember, they were tapering off in sales

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** You're jumping back in time, she's asking when...

**M.G. LORD:** They told me their story starting back in the 1930s

**AUDIO CLIP: M.G. LORD:** But you've been together forever. When you grew up in Denver?

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** Yeah, we met at 16.

**M.G. LORD:** Ruth Handler was the daughter of Polish Jewish immigrants. She was the youngest of 10 children and she fell in love with Elliot, her husband. I mean they were childhood sweethearts. It's sort of tender in that way. Ruth and Elliott were married in 1938

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Then they moved to Los Angeles

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLIOTT HANDLER:** Yeah, I was designing lighting fixtures and she was the Secretary at Paramount. We were experimenting with plastics. We started making our own things. I made it loose, solo

**M.G. LORD:** Barbie was born in 1941

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Their daughter?

**M.G. LORD:** Yeah, Barbie, their actual daughter was born in 1941

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLIOTT HANDLER:** Shortly thereafter I was drafted into the army

**M.G. LORD:** And Ken, their actual son was born in 1944 during Elliot's stint in the U.S army during the war

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Ruth was a natural salesperson, but when she got pregnant, it took her out of business

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** So I stayed home from 41 to 44. And played mother.

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** I love this choice of words: "played mother". It feels really telling

**M.G. LORD:** And also maybe why Ruth never let the Barbie doll have a baby or do "rough" housework as she called it

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Like many women during World War II, Ruth found herself taking on more work. She even dreamed up a company with a family friend Harold Matson

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** He was drafted in the Army. Matt and I started Mattel

**M.G. LORD:** Mattel's first products included a plastic ukulele called the yukadoodle and a xylophone.

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** There were a number of big toy companies competing for the Baby Boomers market. Ideal, Hasbro to name a few, but Mattel had something the others didn't: a marketing strategy that put the company in a position to really take off

**M.G. LORD:** In 1955, Mattel risked its entire net worth to buy advertising on the Mickey Mouse Club program

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH & ELLIOTT HANDLER:** It was a big expenditure. I was worried this was.. \$500,000.

**M.G. LORD:** Mattel was the first toy company to make such a huge investment in direct advertising via television, kind of a new thing to kids

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Oh my gosh, and this was pre-Barbie

**M.G. LORD:** This was pre-Barbie

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** So what were they selling?

**M.G. LORD:** They were selling - they were selling a burp gun, yeah

**AUDIO CLIP: BURP GUN ADVERTISEMENT:** Billy was hunting elephants with his trusty Mattel toy burp gun. That's the only fully automatic cap gun in the world, you know

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** When you said a burp gun I imagine like a whoopee cushion or something, because of the word burp. But in watching this commercial, I'm understanding that the very first toy commercial directed to children was for a very realistic gun.

**AUDIO CLIP: BURP GUN ADVERTISEMENT:** You can tell it's Mattel, it's well

**M.G. LORD:** While the boys were off slaughtering wildlife, Ruth Handler noticed something about how her daughter played with dolls, especially paper dolls

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** Jimmy almost always bought the teenage tie for the adult type. In watching her play with their little girlfriends play paper dolls, the doll was a prop through which they were interpreting the world as they saw it, and they were projecting themselves into their dream of their future

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** The big innovation of Barbie and it's interesting to me watching the trailer for the movie that's coming out, because it's all about this - it even says it in the trailer

**BARBIE MOVIE TRAILER:** There have been dolls [Music] but the dolls were always and forever baby dolls

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Barbie was the first, like aspirational doll and Ruth came up with that idea

**M.G. LORD:** That was her genius

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Before Barbie dolls, dolls were baby dolls that little girls would pretend to be the mother of.

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** There was a doll before Barbie. She had a fat tummy, really was quite homely, uh - not pretty, not shapely, and her clothing - she had dressed, she was a dress-up doll

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** The way that she describes bodies is just, it's kind of -

**M.G. LORD:** It's kind of shocking

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** It's pretty vicious

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** But they were full-bellied and pudgy. They had little girls' bodies and yet you were supposed to pretend that they were teenagers

**M.G. LORD:** Perhaps Ruth's thoughts on those chunky baby dolls were in the back of her mind during the Handler's family vacation in 1956

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** We went to Europe - we went to Lucerne. We saw past a toy store window and there were a bunch of these dolls dressed in these very European costumes, the European skias costumes and there was a swing - one doll was swinging, you know, when we saw them we just loved the way this doll and these windows, where I went in and brought Barbara one for her and one for me.

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** This doll was the Lily doll. The physical form of Lily is basically identical to the first Barbie. You can see the inspiration because they look almost identical, but who was Lily the doll?

**M.G. LORD:** Oh Lily was based on a comic character that ran in the Bild Zeitung which is kind of a down-scale German National Enquirer-type newspaper and in this one, she's like completely naked in the apartment of a female friend. The friend's sitting there and Lily's holding up a tabloid like the Bild Zeitung to cover her naked body and she says to the friend, "We had a fight and he took back all the presents he gave me".

**M.G. LORD:** Now that's how Lily operated in the world. You get a sense of who she was

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Right, she was a woman who who had her possessions given to her by wealthy men

**M.G. LORD:** She was a woman who had sexual encounters with jolly fat cats for money. You know, Lily was the emblem of a German woman who had starved and suffered during the war, but as long as there were men with checkbooks, she would not starve and suffer again... Yeah that's that's a doll for kids

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Barbie, we know her as a toy for kids. Like who was the Lily doll for?

**M.G. LORD:** She was mostly a gag gift that was bought by men for other men

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** It's like the mechanics with like the women in bikini posters

**M.G. LORD:** It's like a 3D pin-up almost, and the doll was advertised with all of these provocative ads that were not the kind of ads, you know, you'd see for children. For instance, that one on the swing that Ruth undoubtedly saw, I have to assume that maybe she didn't read German because the caption for this ad is something like "dehookston Heron hobin lilly garen" sort of gentleman prefers Lily, and at the bottom of another one with two dolls holding hands. Whether more or less naked Lily is always discreet

**M.G. LORD:** When we return, the Lily doll travels from the sweaty hands of German men to sunny California where she will emerge as Barbie

[Music]

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** M.G., this is where the making of the Barbie story I think gets really interesting because we get to hear from the people who designed her face, her body, and her fabulous clothes and in going through your magic tape box, it didn't take us long to find a very key player

**AUDIO CLIP: ANTONIA:** Look at this

**AUDIO CLIP: M.G. LORD:** Oh my God, that's Jack Ryan. Oh my God, my late friend Ella started doing this work in 1978 or 9 for a Yale scholar of the house project

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Ella spoke to many on the amazing team that the Handlers put together to design the first Barbie, and one of those people was this man named Jack Ryan

**AUDIO CLIP: JACK RYAN:** At first, our advertising agency looked at the doll and they were saying, "Boy, she really looks tough doesn't she? What can we do to make her look classy instead of cheap looking?" She did look like a German street walker

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Who is Jack Ryan Jack Ryan?

**M.G. LORD:** Jack Ryan was a Yale educated engineer who worked at Raytheon on the sparrow and Hawk missiles. He was also a notorious playboy.

**AUDIO CLIP: JACK RYAN:** Ruth - her idea was to take this Lily doll and just copy it exactly. I was going to Japan. Ruth stuck this doll into my attache case and said see if you can get this copied

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** At that time, Intel products designed in California were frequently made in Japan

**M.G. LORD:** And in Japan, he supervised the manufacturing of the Barbie doll

**AUDIO CLIP: M.G. LORD:** Did you work out the actual shape, I mean is it really the Lily doll? I mean is it really the shape?

**AUDIO CLIP: JACK RYAN:** Well, they were very reluctant to let me change it very much. So I changed it as much as I could get away with. I mean I redesigned her eyes, and her hair, and her skull, and her hairline, and her lips, and her neck, and her shoulders, and her breasts

**M.G. LORD:** Jack toned down the doll's makeup, made the lips less voluptuous, slimmed down her shoulders, and got rid of her Widow's Peak, but there was a hitch

**AUDIO CLIP: JACK RYAN:** And each time, I would get a half a dozen back, there were nipples on the breasts, and our marketing - our marketing people were scared to put out a doll with nipples on it. So every time the masters came from Japan, it was my duty to take my little fine Swiss file which they used for working on watches - Swiss files are for watch work and I very daintily filed the nipples off and returned them, and kept coming back with nipples. So finally after I filed them off several times, they got the idea that they were supposed to make it without nipples

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** The image of Jack Ryan filing off the tiny nipples is - so it will be seared in my memory forever

**M.G. LORD:** Jack would be a designer at Mattel for about two decades. We'll get into some of his most perplexing doll creations later in the series

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** M.G., the next person we found in your tapes is equally memorable and in some ways, I would say more important: the woman who designed Barbie's first wardrobe, Charlotte Johnson

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** Just looking at the doll, she is sophisticated, yeah

**M.G. LORD:** Charlotte Johnson. I didn't actually know her, but she sounded amazing. Charlotte was interviewed by my friend and colleague, Ella King Tori who is a consultant on my book. And in many ways, Charlotte sort of created the first Barbie in the image of herself.

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLA KING TORI:** When the Handlers came to you to help dress and design the dresses of it all, what had you been doing at that time?

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** Well I worked for many years in New York in 7th and 8th Avenue

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLA KING TORI:** What was it like, designing the dress? I mean did they give you the first line...

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** No, they didn't give me anything. They just said, they put me on a plane and said do it over there

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** She didn't just design the outfits. She negotiated deals with the Japanese manufacturers

**M.G. LORD:** She was autonomous in her 40s. I guess by then she lived in Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, which also no longer exists and negotiated these contracts. You know, it's not even that easy today for a woman executive in Japan. I just can't even imagine what it must have been like in 1957.

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** I don't think the company really had any plans of how it would work out.

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLA KING TORI:** Did the Americans make up...

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** They'd be over there... I just kept designing.

**AUDIO CLIP: ELLA KING TORI:** The first one, I mean I - it's just beautiful

**AUDIO CLIP: CHARLOTTE JOHNSON:** I knew that first year, I made that black dress with that fishtail rough around the bottom. It looked like someone performing, you know, and at that time there was a singer named Hildegard at the Waldorf who - who was the leading sanctus, you know so she always carried along silk handkerchief, and so I made a pink silk you know for Barbie to carry

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** So body, check. wardrobe, check. How about the doll's name?

**M.G. LORD:** The story is that Barbie is named for Ruth's daughter Barbara, but actually Barbara wasn't called Barbie. She was called - wait for it: Babs

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** Our first attempt had been for Babs, because that was the nickname that we applied to it. We tried to get clearance on Babs and our patent lawyers told us to use something else, so we - I asked about Barbie, he says go ahead on that one, so that was it

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** So Ruth has her Barbie doll who has this, like hot body and these cool clothes, but there was another thing that Mattel was really honing in on, was marketing. How did they figure out how to market the doll?

**M.G. LORD:** Well, Ruth knew she needed a focus group. She needed market research and she hired the most cutting edge, insightful market researcher, you know in all of Manhattan: Ernst Victor, a real Viennese psychoanalyst

**M.G. LORD:** He conducted research with dozens of parents and hundreds of kids. Kids loved her. Parents loathed her, and the report quotes a housewife and mother of three. Quote "I know little girls want dolls with high heels but I object to that sexy costume," *pointing to the sheer pink negligee* "I wouldn't walk around the house like that. I don't like that influence on my little girl. If only they would let children remain young a little longer," said the mother of an eight-year-old

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** Incredible. How did you get that?

**M.G. LORD:** When I began my work, he was no longer alive but his widow still lived in the castle. They all had castles. In his castle in Croton on Hudson, and she let me go up by train. It took two days to hand copy with a pencil everything in the report, which is why I'm so attached to reading it aloud now

**ANTONIA CEREIJIDO:** That's incredible

**M.G. LORD:** These women hate the doll, because she's such a sex object, but because of the culture - one of the things that

mothers, I believe in that generation had to do was groom the female child to get a meal ticket AKA a husband. And here this was, this was the breakthrough, you know. He located their Achilles heel and formulated a plan to exploit it. One woman who had found Barbie way too racy changed her mind when she heard her eight-year-old daughter comment, "She's so well groomed, Mommy". Out of this came Victor's strategy: convince mom that Barbie will make quote "a poised little lady out of her raffish unkempt possibly boyish child." Remind mom what she believes deep down but dares not express. Better her daughter should appeal in a sleazy way to a man than be unable to attract one at all. This is part of the darkness [Music]

**AANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** So that is like the whole thing. They were like, this is the setup for Barbie. This is what she looks like. We're presenting her in this way where she's teaching young girls how to be attractive to one day acquire a husband

**M.G. LORD:** Right, but Charlotte you know I mean the great thing about Barbie is so many things get projected on this piece of plastic. Charlotte was doing exactly the opposite thing. Charlotte was making sure from the very first set of outfits that Barbie had a way to make a living. Rosie gal came with the fashion sketchbook - it was like Charlotte herself

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** People were already transposing what they wanted onto Barbie

**M.G. LORD:** I think that's what makes this hunk of plastic so fascinating. The ones who hate it, project something onto it. The ones who fall in love with it, project something else onto it. It's a hunk of plastic!

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Okay so this hunk of plastic..

**M.G. LORD:** This hussy hunk of the plastic

**ANTONIA CERREIJIDO:** Has her debut in...

**M.G. LORD:** It was March of 1959, that Toy Fair happened. All the little booths and displays were kind of fussed over by - by

female attendants in tight clothing, you know, so Toy Fair wasn't a bunch of -

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Kids

**M.G. LORD:** Yeah, it wasn't a bunch of kids, and it wasn't men and women. It was mostly men acquiring for big stores like Sears

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** Let's hear Ruth describe how it was at the Toy Fair

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** Fully fifty percent of the buyers who came to Toy Show rejected the doll and would not order it. I'm really very disappointed that buyers reviews... we cut back on our production plans as a result of that

**M.G. LORD:** Those reluctant toy buyers assumed that mothers would run like hell from a doll with breasts

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** They didn't want to sell a sexy toy

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** But the thing that really happened is that when we started to ship and it got on the counter, the consumers just walked away with it so fast, the stores didn't know what happened

**M.G. LORD:** Kids started clamoring for it when they saw the commercials

[Music]

**M.G. LORD:** And when school is out when they have more time to clamor and watch television, that's when the sales really took off

**ANTONIA CERREIJO:** They sold three hundred thousand dolls in that first year

**AUDIO CLIP: RUTH HANDLER:** It just hit the country like a storm

**ANTONIA CERELJIDO:** Barbie's wearing a wedding dress at the end, and even the words in the song in the jingle says "one day I'll be just like you". I mean it's literally out of Victor's research - he's saying the whole point of this is to look up to being a bride, a blushing bride

**M.G. LORD:** For starters, she's got the dress but there's no husband, so the next thing that everybody - you know, I mean there's all those letters from mothers and children because a woman without a husband in 1960 was a failure, so they had to make a boyfriend doll. They had to make an accessory

**AUDIO CLIP: COMMERCIAL:** Barbie, the famous teenage fashion model doll by Mattel felt that this was to be a special night and then it happened: she met Ken and somehow -

**M.G. LORD:** Next week the introduction of Ken and his controversial balls

**ANTONIA CERELJIDO:** That's going to be a good one, and as society changed through the 1960s, how could Barbie manage to stay relevant all this and much more next week on: LA Made

the Barbie tapes [Music] thank you