There are certainly “big movies” such as Gone with the Wind and “small movies” such as Beasts of the Southern Wild, but Andreas Heinrich, Chris Lutz, Susanne Baumann, and Ileana Rau at IBM literally have set a new Guinness World RecordTM for the smallest movie ever made. Heinrich et al. used a remotely operated two-ton scanning tunneling microscope to manipulate carbon monoxide molecules into a pattern, then capture the image (at a magnification of about 100,000,000×!), then move a few atoms and capture another image, and so on. This was done at 268 degrees below zero Celsius. Then approximately 250 images were assembled into a stop-action movie accompanied by cute music that lasts a little over a minute [1]. The “boy” appears to be composed of 88 individual atoms. He bounces a “ball” (a single atom) off a wall in a minuscule game of “handatom,” which is reminiscent of the early video game “Pong.” Then he bounces on a tiny trampoline. The movie concludes with a tasteful mention of IBM.

According to Ari Entin, another member of the team at IBM, they made this movie because they really wanted to use it as a conversation starter to get children and the general public excited about science, math, and technology. They hope this movie inspires more people to become scientists and technologists. The world needs more professionals in these fields to encourage future innovations.

References
[2] The author gratefully acknowledges Dr. Ari Entin for reviewing this article.
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