

# Handle with Care

## Digital Press Kit



# **Short Synopsis**

James is house sitting for an eccentric Entomologist (bug scientist) when one of the potentially dangerous creepy-crawlies escapes from its container. The original version of film was created for a 72 Hour Film Competition.

# **Medium Synopsis**

James takes a job housesitting for Raphael Vargas, an esteemed and eccentric entomologist famed in the insect science community for his incredible bug-communication techniques. The house is filled with tanks containing dangerous and potentially lethal creepy-crawlies. When one of the little guys escapes, James has a lot more to worry about than watching over the house... *Handle with Care* was originally made for a 72 Hour Film Festival, meaning the entirety of production took place within a three day time period. We wrote the film on Friday, shot everything (including the time-lapses!) on Saturday, and edited the whole thing on Sunday. This version has seen some final tweaks made to the edit, in order to perfect our original vision!

# **Long Synopsis**

James takes a job house sitting for Raphael Vargas, an esteemed and eccentric entomologist famed in the insect science community for his incredible bug-communication techniques. The house is filled with tanks containing dangerous and potentially lethal creepy-crawlies. When one of the little guys escapes, James has a lot more to worry about than watching over the house... Like protecting his girlfriend from entering the insect warzone, making sure the other bugs don't also escape, not sleeping to ensure his own safety, and of course -- not dying.

This project was originally created for an international 72 Hour Film Competition, meaning the entire project was conceived and shot within two days. Our third day was reserved for editing, but this version has had additional work done to the edit in order to perfect our vision. This film shows the ability of Thursday Shoots to produce quality content even under intense time restrictions and pressure.

The original version of this project made the top 25 films in the competition, and won three different awards. It won two "Best use of Genre" awards for our assigned genres of Mistaken Identity and Surprise Ending; and an award for "Best use of Character" for the assigned bug scientist, Rafael Vargas played by Willy Appelman.

# **Cast and Crew Bios**

## **James Best (Lead)**



James, playing the inventively named lead roll “James” in Handle with Care, is a talented New York based actor who has starred in many short films. His performance in “Close Shave,” got him the Best Supporting Actor award during the 2017 New York 48 Hour Film Project. He played a featured role in “The Purge: Election Year” and starred in award winning short film, “Door to Door.” He’s also held leading roles on the stage including “The Actor’s Nightmare,” “With This Ring,” “A Rainbow Holiday,” and “Last minute Adjustments.”

## Willy Appelman (Supporting Actor)



Willy Appelman plays Rafael Vargas in "Handle with Care". He is a comedian based in NYC. He hails from the Green Mountains of Vermont and is a graduate of Skidmore College. He recently co-wrote and starred in a webseries for Origin Films and can be seen in the upcoming short, "Under Your Mattress", which he also co-wrote. His short film, "Dear Reni" premiered at The Indianapolis International Film Festival in 2012 and his film "Tall Tale Tanner" won Best Short & Audience Pick at The 2010 Chicago United Film Festival. He has performed at Ars Nova, Chicago Sketchfest, The NY Improv Festival, The Frigid Festival, The Dream Up Festival and recently performed in Adam Szymkiewicz's "Clown Bar" (New York Times Critics' Pick).

Willy has studied at NYU's Tisch School of Drama, The Second City, Magnet Theater and UCB with Armando Diaz, Louis Kornfeld, Chris Kelly, Neil Casey, Rich Talarico, Jet Eveleth and Adam Wade to name a few. He is a 2-time Moth StorySLAM winner and has been featured on The Truth Podcast. He recently worked as a Producer for The San Francisco Improv Festival and has worked behind the scenes for HBO, The Colbert Report, TBS, Sesame Street, Comedy Central and The Huffington Post.

## Phillip Russell (Producer, DP)

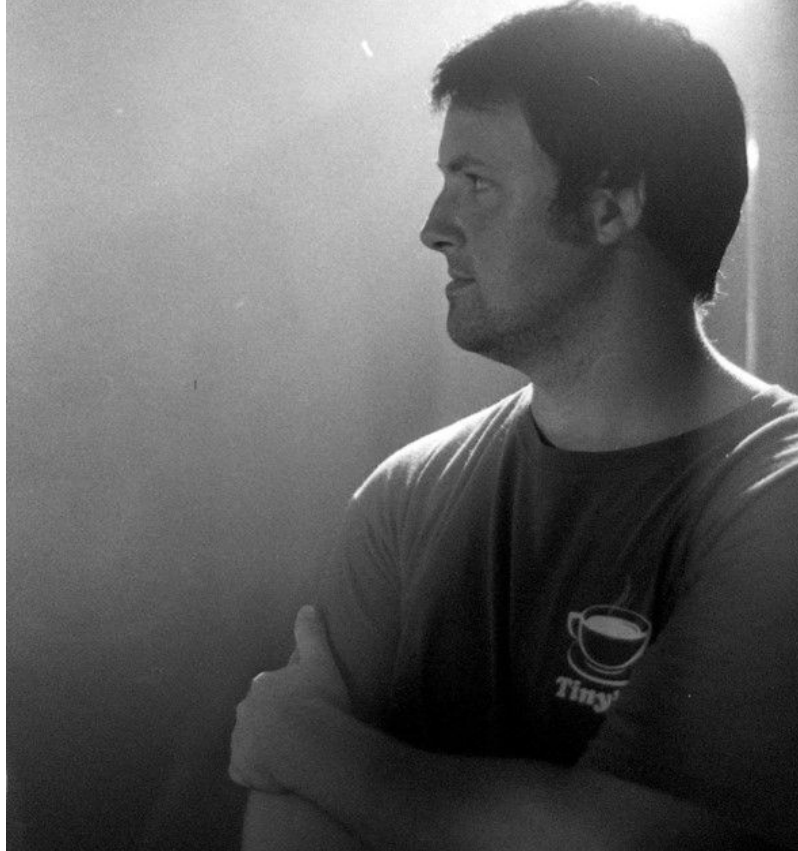


Phillip Russell is primarily a New York based freelance Producer with experience ranging from short web content and commercials to indy feature films. He has created content for TruTV, Above Average, College Humor, UCB Comedy, Funny or Die, and more. He and a growing group of talented filmmakers created a production team named *Thursday Shoots*, who produce videos specializing in comedy. Phil has worked directly with comedic talents such as Brian Quinn (*Impractical Jokers*), Patrick Noth (*The Jim Gaffigan Show*), Nicole Drespel (*Broad City*, *30 Rock*) and Shalyah Evans (MTV's *Girl Code*) to name a few.

Phil has received multiple awards both as a Producer and a DP. He and *Thursday Shoots* have won the Audience Choice Award at the New York 48 Hour Film Project 4 years in a row (2014, 2015, and 2016) for their films *Making Friends*, *Night Shift*, and *Door to Door*, and *Close Shave*.

The team has received 10 unique awards for 48 Hour and 72 Hour film projects in varying categories, including best VFX, Cinematography, Makeup, Writing, and more. Phil has also worked on shows and films including *Elementary*, *Billions*, *Adult Beginners* (Nick Kroll), and *I Smile Back* (Sarah Silverman)."

## Michael Mercadante (Director)



At twelve years old, Mercadante received a Sony Handycam for Christmas and began writing and directing short films in his parent's house and around the town he grew up in of Greenlawn, NY. None of which were very good, but were the essential stepping stones that lead him to study Film/Video at Five Towns College in Dix Hills, NY. There he received his Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts and for his senior thesis; wrote, directed and edited the multi-award winning short film Blind Date.

During his time at Five Towns, he also co-founded the production company Thursday Shoots, with two of his other classmates, and continues to make shorts, music videos, sketches, web series, etc. Including his most recent directorial effort Handle with Care which was selected out of almost 200 other projects worldwide to be in the Top 25 films featured for the 4 Points Film Festival in contention for the Audience Choice Award and several other awards including: Best Directing, Best Film, Best Cinematography, etc.



## Kevin Etherson (Writer, Producer)



Kevin Etherson is a director, writer, producer, and editor who is really good at uploading videos to YouTube. Kevin is currently a producer on the truTV series [\*Impractical Jokers: Inside Jokes\*](#) and was previously the head-producer and director of UCB Comedy's narrative series team, *Three-Thirds* and their music video sketch team, [\*The Backyard\*](#). Kevin has directed and produced short films, music videos, commercials, and original series for truTV, Above Average, Funny or Die, CollegeHumor, and that person who's on your improv team. His work has been featured in the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Splitsider, IFC, and blogs across the osphere.

Kevin is a co-founder of [\*Thursday Shoots\*](#), a production group based out of New York. Together they have produced hundreds of videos, 3 of which his parents were proud of.

Kevin has won multiple awards for his work, including Best Screenplay for "Making Friends", a short film entered into the 2014 New York 48 Hour Film Project.

## Tom Capps (Writer, Producer)



Tom A. Capps is a writer/producer/director/editor/performer/guy with too many slashes in his title. He co-founded Thursday Shoots and has made various projects for places like UCB Comedy, TruTV, Verizon FiOS 1, MTV, College Humor 2, Above Average and Funny or Die. When he's not working on projects he spends his free time wandering around Queens spending all his money on cacti. Tom has won multiple awards for his work as a Producer, including 6 unique Audience Choice Awards. Tom usually has a beard and absolutely hates writing in third person.



## Charlie DesJardin (Producer)



Charlie DesJardin is a filmmaker and professional freelancer who is currently working in the industry on projects, some of which include commercial production. He is also a Film/Video Adjunct Professor and Film Operations Manager at Five Towns College. He offers Director of Photography work for independent films and media industries, such as Sotheby's Art House in NY and Time Warner Cable. Charlie has worked with variety of equipment, including Canon, Sony, Red, Arri and much more. Charlie has BFA in Film/Video, He also has been trained in Cinematography by late seasoned professional Sol Negrin, ASC. Charlie has also won best cinematography in 2015 in the NY 48 hour film project, and has won numerous awards for his work as a cinematographer and producer. Charlie is also putting his films in film festivals and working on his own independent projects as a director.

# FAQ

## **Why are you called Thursday Shoots?**

Thursday Shoots was first created in 2011 when a few of us formed a group while attending Five Towns College. We agreed to meet up and film something every Thursday, and decided to name ourselves Thursday Shoots. We still work together professionally to this day, and now get to make movies on more than just Thursdays!

## **Why do you guys enter film races so much?**

We enjoy 48 Hour competitions because they are true challenges. There's nothing more stressful than trying to make a film in an extremely short time period, and nothing more satisfying than handing the completed film in on time. Doing these competitions improved our abilities as filmmakers, and now we can handle high pressure situations better than ever. Need that commercial completed in a couple of days? Cake walk.

## **Do you only make comedies?**

We make comedies a lot, but no we don't exclusively make comedies. We certainly specialize in comedy. We've worked with TruTV, UCB, Collegehumor, Above Average, Funny or Die, and more. That being said, we also love horror, and aren't afraid of jumping into a drama every once and awhile either. We don't discriminate against genres. We'll probably throw a joke or two into the mix, though!

## **Where did you get all of those bugs last minute?**

Ah, yes. For *Handle with Care*, the character we were assigned to include in the film was "Rafael Vargas: Entomologist." One of our friends is actually a bug collector, and he was willing to bring a bunch of his creepy-crawlies to set for us to use to freak out James Best with. We got B-Roll of the most poisonous ones at a separate, secure location of course.

# Production Stills







# Director Statement

Handle with Care was the second time I directed a project that had to be completed from start to finish in a 2-3 day window. Film races are intense, but very rewarding when you succeed. A lot of it is a blur, but I remember the final night we were editing down to the last 15 minutes, rushing to make the deadline! Handle with Care was a very fun project to work on from start to finish. My favorite moment during production had to be during the first night when we conceived the idea. Myself and the cinematographer Phillip Russell went on a food run for the crew after the first draft of the script had been completed, and we decided that the movie needed to have a giant caterpillar monster in it -- even with the crazy time restriction!

## Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/229214167>

