



JIM

A Film By
Jeremy Morris-Burke

A Tinmouth Films Production

US Distributor:

Area 23a
Contact: Kirt Eftekhar
1223 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 820
Santa Monica, CA 90403
(310) 399-7937
kirt@area23a.com

Press Contacts:

NY/ National:

Jackie Bazan
BazanPR
4 Rainbow Terrace
West Orange, NJ 07052
p: (212)643-4664
f: (212) 643-4688
jbazan@bazanpr.com

Vincent Nebrida
39-85 65th Place, Apt. 2R
Woodside, NY 11377
p: 310-869-5305
vincemagi@hotmail.com

LA:

Marina Bailey
1615 North Laurel Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90046
p: (323) 650-3627
m: (213) 448-9039
marina@marinabailey.com

Full EPK with images available at:

www.jimthefilm.com/press



CAST AND CREW

Jim DAN ILLIAN
Susan VANESSA MORRIS-BURKE
3774 ABIGAIL SAVAGE
Niskaa MICHAEL STRELOW
Nicodemus ATTICUS CAIN

Written and Directed by
JEREMY MORRIS-BURKE

Executive Producer
KRISTINA SZANDTNER

Produced By
VANESSA MORRIS-BURKE
JEREMY MORRIS-BURKE

Director of Photography
JEREMY MORRIS-BURKE

Music By
ALEXANDRE TANNOUS

Edited By
JEREMY MORRIS-BURKE

Production Designers
SUZANNE WANG
MICHAEL BYRNES

Costume Designer
RABIAH TRONCELLITI



SYNOPSIS

Being steadily crushed under the weight of debt, unemployment, and increasing isolation, Jim reaches a breaking point. Over a game of solitary Russian roulette he contemplates an unspeakable act of violence as a way of leaving his mark. He is stopped short by a vision of his deceased wife who convinces him that he should instead focus his remaining resources into an act of creation. Armed with his wife's frozen eggs and a new resolve, Jim secures the services of a large biotech firm to help him create an heir who will be engineered to overcome the obstacles of common men.

Meanwhile in the distant future Niskaa, the leader of a group of genetically modified beings, controls a race of worker clones in a super-industrialized, post-human Earth. As he tries to restore his decrepit empire he comes face to face with a young clone that shows an unprecedented capacity for reason and empathy. Somehow connected to Jim via dreams, the clone manifests secrets of Nature that Niskaa has not accounted for...



Director's statement on the film:

It was important for me in making this film to illuminate patterns over long time-spans; to interweave past, present, and future and highlight the points at which they interconnect and become indiscernible from one another. I chose film as my medium because it offers the opportunity to assemble visual, aural, and emotional constructs into a larger whole that can transcend its parts. Thus, the three stories in this film run in parallel and feed into one another in various ways.

Trapped in the midst of a lonely and unraveling life, Jim is forced to make important decisions under extreme duress. Being only human, he needs to be sure his life means something and therefore funnels his remaining resources into securing his legacy via Lorigen, a company offering social and economic security through genetic enhancement. The past represented in the film serves as fuel for Jim's resolve, while the future is a hypothetical projection derived of his decision. Though Jim is the nucleus of the events in the film, they are never fully under his control- in fact, many of the problems he initiates are never even known to him. This seemed to me an appropriate framework for a movie about the issues involved in manipulating the genes of future generations.

I wrote this film as a way of exploring the idea that events, like people, have ancestors. Inspiration came from my friends, family, and imagination. Everyone has a story to tell, but today's story is informed by the events of yesterday, while that story will undoubtedly influence what happens tomorrow, and so on.

Being an independent filmmaker of modest means, it was my challenge to convey this story with the tools I had at my disposal. Recent advances in desktop cinema, and the availability of inexpensive tools and training, contributed greatly to the final product, as did the enthusiastic help of many good people. Being almost entirely self-taught, I owe my virtual tutors in cyberspace a debt of gratitude.

As for the characters in the film, many of them are composites of people I know and the experiences they've had. This is especially true of Jim. The world he inhabits, where the dying middle-class struggles to hold on as shifting social norms and technological progress allow the affluent to excel to ever-greater heights, is informed by the plights and struggles of many people close to me. It was important to me create a character in Jim that never comes across as a loser, but instead simply can't maintain his foothold in the face of insurmountable social and economic obstacles. For Jim and those in a similar position, the American Dream has been dead for a while now- we are just grasping at the remaining scraps.



Meanwhile in the background a large biotech firm peddles genetic wares promising to help consumers overcome the obstacles common to their peers. Now the “War on the Middle-Class” is reframed as an “Arms Race Within the Middle-Class”. In the film, as in life, we find that the wealthy have their own hidden system for maintaining their position. In that sense, the playing field is only level as far as you can see it- beyond the horizon, mountains lurk in the haze of exclusivity. Genetic enhancement at the retail level may, among other things, increase the depth of your gaze. Whether it can help you reach those distant peaks, or navigate the murky ethical and socio-economic terrain in between, is another matter entirely.

Notes on the Production of Jim

The challenges of making “Jim” on such a small budget seemed at first insurmountable. Everything had to be planned down to the inch, and we didn’t have much help in that regard. Aside from writing, directing, shooting, and editing the film, I also scheduled, coordinated and managed much of the production process with the help of my wife Vanessa. I also created all of the visual effects, built a detailed rough sound edit (which was finished and mixed by DigIt audio) and engineered the score as it was created by Alexandre Tannous, the composer. In other words, “Jim” is about as DIY as it gets.

Having never been on a film set before the first day of shooting, I had a lot to learn about filmmaking. During the year or so I was writing the screenplay I was also learning as much as I could about available film technologies and trying to estimate the resources and favors I thought I could gather in pursuit of the project. As I learned new things, I re-worked the script to fit what I had. Once in a while we found an amazing location, like Cementland in St. Louis where the sci-fi story was filmed, and scaled up the script (and our production efforts) to match.

By shooting in St. Louis, my hometown, we managed to find some fantastic crew people with a lot of experience who helped us immeasurably in bringing the script to life. It also allowed me to call on some long-time friends like Shawn T. Bell who did wonders as our sound recordist. Institutions like the City Museum and Bob Cassilly (yes, he is an institution) provided unmatched locations and understood our modest means. Suddenly, our DIY film was being done with lots of others.

We did some other shooting in New Jersey, New York, and even a barn in Vermont, and had a lot of help from dedicated people in those places too. I think



it's safe to say that we relied on everyone we know in every city in which we've lived, and then some.

As for technical specs, I decided to shoot in high-def on the HVX-200 using lens adapters which allowed us to add Nikon primes to the camera. Of course, there are now numerous other camera options available, including the RED system, but none of those were around when we shot the film. Besides, many would have been out of our price range anyway.

The entire post-production process was carried out in Final Cut Studio, with many FX shots done in After Effects and Photoshop with the help of some great plugins. Apple's Shake was used for some compositing, and the score was built in Logic. What's great about this workflow is that it allowed me to essentially do everything myself in my small studio, which meant I could be pretty ambitious as a filmmaker even with very little money.



CREW:

Jeremy Morris-Burke (*Filmmaker*) is originally from St. Louis, MO and moved to New York City in 1997 to pursue an MFA in Design for Stage and Film at NYU. Over the next few years Mr. Morris-Burke designed lighting and scenery for dozens of theatre and dance pieces in the US and Europe. He and his wife Vanessa founded a non-profit production company to assist in raising funds for some of these projects, their first foray into producing.

Having long been interested in film and video, Mr. Morris-Burke began shooting dance films for some of the choreographers with whom he had been working. This also led him into editing, which evolved into a fascination for cinematic storytelling.

While writing “Jim” for the stage, Mr. Morris-Burke realized that the scope of the story he wanted to tell was better suited to cinema. Though initially overwhelmed at the prospect of learning filmmaking from scratch, Jeremy went headlong into the multiple challenges of script development, technical research, financing and pre-planning required to bring his vision to the screen.

“Jim” marks Jeremy Morris-Burke’s debut as a feature film director. Coming from a background in theatre, Jeremy is a completely self-taught and independent filmmaker. He believes that this film is a testament to the ability of young filmmakers with limited resources to create and share work without compromising their artistic goals.

Mr. Morris-Burke currently resides in New York with his wife Vanessa and their two-year-old daughter.

Alexandre Tannous (*Composer*) Alexandre holds a Bachelor of Music with a double major in Music Theory and Composition from Montclair State University, and a Master of Arts degree in Music Education from Columbia University Teachers College. As a recipient of the Mellon Fellowship he also earned a Master of Arts and a Master of Philosophy degree in Ethnomusicology from Columbia University where he was enrolled in the PH.D. program. He has taught various music courses there as well, and currently teaches privately. The works of Alexandre Tannous are frequently performed in the United States, Europe and in Asia. His orchestral composition *Métamorphose* premiered under his baton at Carnegie Hall in 1995, and received a standing ovation. As an ethnomusicologist he has conducted fieldwork over many years with musicians in the States and abroad. Alexandre is a frequent lecturer at Georgetown University, Princeton University, and Columbia University, and in museums such as the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Metropolitan Museum of New York. As a film composer, Alexandre has composed two film-scores: “The Seventh Dog” (2005), and “Jim” (2010).



PRINCIPAL CAST

Dan Illian (*Jim Kotofsky*) Dan has originated many roles on the stage, most notably in Lars Norén's U.S. premiere of "The Last Supper," "Dead City," Sheila Callaghan's play based on *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and "Self Defense" by Carson Kreitzer. Mr. Illian recently appeared as Jason in "Medea" at LaMaMa e.t.c., and on tour in Istanbul and Adana, Turkey. He appeared as Rodolfo in "West Pier" at the Koltès Festival; as Lopakhin in "The Cherry Orchard," and Alceste in "The Misanthrope." Other theater credits include numerous roles as a company member of the renowned Guthrie Theater under the late Artistic Director, Garland Wright, including "The Winter's Tale," directed by Doug Hughes; "The Play's the Thing," directed by Michael Engler; "King Lear;" "Merchant of Venice" and "A Woman of No Importance." Film credits include leading roles in "And" and "The," two films by artist/director, Pierre St-Jacques; "Leaving Ashland;" "I.D." and "Shoot You Back."

Vanessa Morris-Burke (*Susan Kotofsky*) is a New York based actor and producer. She was last seen on stage in William Electric Black's "Betty and the Belrays" at Theater for the New City. Other roles include Sonya in Jay Scheib's "In This is the End of Sleeping", based on Chekhov's Platonov fragment (Connelly Theatre), Ophelia and Horatio in "The Hamlet Project" (LaMaMa e.t.c.) and Chrysothemis in "Elektra" (Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center). Vanessa has worked as a theatre producer with ROTOR Productions Ltd. on "West Pier" in New York and Tolstoy's "Power of Darkness" at the Trafo theatre in Budapest, Hungary.

Abigail Savage (#3774) Credits include "Precious" and Brian De Palma's "Redacted," as well as several short films including "Misdemeanor" and "Lone Star State." On television, she's made appearances in "Law & Order SVU" and "The Return of Jezebel James." Abby is also a sound designer for film and credits include "Universal Soldier: Regeneration," episodes of "Ugly Americans" and "SuperJail," "The Pat Tillman Story," "Sugar," and all three of Ramin Bahrani's films ("Goodbye Solo," "Chop Shop," "Man Push Cart"). She was born and raised – and still lives – in New York.

SUPPORTING CAST

Atticus Cain (*Nicodemus*) Born in Memphis, TN and raised primarily in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Atticus Cain's introduction to acting came during his junior year of high school, when he was recruited to substitute for a fellow student in a play. After graduating, he advanced to local theater, appearing in several roles ranging from Shakespeare to Guare. After a brief hiatus from acting, Atticus



moved to Pittsburgh in 1997. He resumed acting with a cameo role on the CBS series "The Guardian" (2002). Since then, he has appeared in short films, including "Wrong Number" (2003) and "The Stranger" (2005); the Bobby Moresco feature "10th and Wolf" (2006); and "The U" (2009), a television pilot centering on an African-American University. Also in 2009, he was selected to be the first actor to portray Dr. George Washington Carver for Syracuse University's esteemed Backstory program - bringing to life the great inventor in a touring show for elementary and high schools. Most recently he starred in the award-winning short, "Deadline" (2009), produced by Corkwood Pictures. Atticus divides his time between New York and Pittsburgh.

Michael Strelow (*Niskaa*) was born and raised in Kansas. Acting credits include Raymond in the independent horror film "The Vampire Diaries: Part 1, Thicker than Water" (official selection of the 2007 Independent Features Film Festival at Tribeca Cinemas). Michael has been seen on television in "Flight of the Conchords" (HBO); "Engineering an Empire" (History Channel); and on an installment of "The American Experience, Roads to Memphis" (PBS). His work on the stage includes Deborah Warner's "The Angel Project" (Lincoln Center). Michael currently lives in New York with his fiancée and their six-month old son.