

# Gold Cap Films

Presents



*Directed by Tammy Caplan & Joe Tyler Gold*

*Starring Joe Tyler Gold, Valerie Dillman, Jonathan Levit, Sascha Alexander, and John Getz*

Running Time: 86 minutes  
This film is not rated.

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**“Desperate Acts of Magic is a fun look at the hidden world of magic, with a plot that has more tricky twists than a magic contortionist!”  
Jeff McBride, Creator of the Mystery School of Magic**

### **LOGLINE**

A magician competes in an international magic contest where he goes head-to-head with a female street magician he has fallen in love with.

### **SYNOPSIS**

Jason is not the magician he wishes he was. Bored with his life as a computer programmer, he dreams of becoming a professional magician.

Stacy achieved that dream, only to be spit out by the male-dominated magic establishment, leaving her to fend for herself on the street passing the hat to tourists, and picking pockets.

They both have something to prove. The Brotherhood of Magicians Competition gives them one last shot at success. But as the sparks fly between them, will Stacy pull Jason into her life of crime?

### **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Joe was inspired to write *Desperate Acts of Magic* from many real events in his life. With his background in both magic and theater, he noticed the subservient role that women play in most magic acts. Time and time again they are portrayed as servants parading around in skimpy outfits with no real purpose except to carry the magician's props or be butchered by him in some horrific illusion. And although women in that role may be appropriate in some performances, it seemed odd to Joe that women were seen in that way most of the time. Joe wanted magicians to think more creatively about how women can be integrated into magic routines and not just standing on stage in a glittery leotard. This inspired *Desperate Acts of Magic*.

Hollywood always portrays women as magic assistants but rarely magicians. Among the few exceptions is the 1907 nine-minute short, *The Red Spectre*, showing a caped woman battling a devil with magic tricks. In 1974, the French film, *Celine and Julie Go Boating* shows Celine as a bohemian stage magician.

*Desperate Acts of Magic* is one of the only movies ever made to feature a female magician. One of the reasons that young girls don't get into magic is that there are very few role models portrayed in the media. We hope this movie will inspire young girls, that they can do magic too.



**The magic was accomplished without any special effects or camera tricks. Whenever possible, the magic was shot and edited in one continuous take without any cuts.**

## ***Crew Biographies***

### **Joe Tyler Gold (Writer, Co-Director, Co-Producer, Co-Editor, role of Jason)**

*Desperate Acts of Magic* was inspired by Joe Gold's experience as a professional magician performing over 500 kids' birthday parties, and entering numerous magic competitions. Joe's first feature film, *Never Say Macbeth*, which he wrote, produced, and starred in, had a successful film festival run and received DVD distribution from Vanguard Cinema in August, 2008. *Never Say Macbeth* received rave reviews including a 100% positive ("Fresh") rating on the industry-standard film review website, Rotten Tomatoes. Joe also wrote, produced, and starred in the comedic short film, *Fartman: Caught in a Tight Ass*, which appeared on Howard Stern's In Demand cable channel, Howard TV, and had over 264,000 views on the comedy short film website, Atom.com. He also produced the short film *Petrol* which was a finalist at the Almost Famous Film Festival. Joe's other comedic screenplay, *Betting the House*, was a quarterfinalist in the Slamdance Film Festival Screenwriting Competition. He is also a member of the award winning Circle X Theatre Co.

### **Tammy Caplan (Co-Director, Co-Producer, Co-Editor, role of Brenda)**

Tammy Caplan graduated from the School of Theater, Film and Television at UCLA where she won the Chancellor's Marshall award. She produced the feature film, *Never Say Macbeth* and the short film, *Petrol*. She also directed, edited and co-wrote the comedic short film, *Fartman: Caught in a Tight Ass*. She directed the commercial *Pistachio Love* which received an Honorable Mention in the Wonderful Pistachios Get Crackin' Contest. Her acting credits include *Weeds*, *Seventh Heaven*, *The Division*, *The Man Show*, the independent films *Fighting Words*, *Never Say Macbeth* and numerous commercials. Her screenplay, *8th Grade Sucks*, was a Nicholl quarterfinalist and a winner of the Script Savvy Screenplay Competition. She is now writing a superhero movie.

### **Brian Taylor (Director of Photography)**

Brian Taylor is a San Diego born, Los Angeles based Director and Director of Photography, graduate of the UCLA School of the Arts in Fine Art and Photography and member of the International Cinematographer's Guild. Since beginning work on the production of the documentary *State of S* in 1998, Brian has been working non-stop on features, network television, commercials and music videos. His art and still photography works have been shown in magazines, galleries and museums worldwide.

### **Tony Clark (Lead Magic Consultant)**

After studying with the legendary magician Slydini, Tony won the World Class Stage Contest for the Society of American Magicians. In 1996, he produced and performed in his hit magic revue show, *Phantasy*. This show made Lake Tahoe entertainment history for being the first show to run four years straight. Recently Tony taught magic to Nicholas Cage for the film *Next* and John Malkovich for *The Great Buck Howard*. He was also the magic consultant for *House, MD*, *Monk*, *Brothers and Sisters*, and Gold Cap Film's first feature, *Never Say Macbeth*. Today Tony utilizes his thirty years of experience to create and produce illusion concepts for stage, television and film.

### **David Regal (Lead Magic Consultant)**

David Regal is a television writer and a creator of effects for magicians. He is the author of two books on magic, *Constant Fooling* and *Approaching Magic*. He is a frequent performer at The Magic Castle. On VH1's *Celebracadabra*, he coached actor C. Thomas Howell to a 1st place win in this magic competition show. In addition, magic effects of his design are performed around the world. He has also served as head writer for Nickelodeon's *Rugrats*, and has written for many sitcoms, including multiple episodes of *Everybody Loves Raymond*.



The cast of *Desperate Acts of Magic* is comprised of some of the most respected magicians in the world including Rob Zabrecky, Nathan Burton, Hiawatha Johnson, Jr., Brian Gillis and more.

## Cast Biographies

### Jonathan Levit (Steve Kramer)

Jonathan Levit first received notoriety for his starring role in *The X-Files*, playing opposite Ricky Jay. He has since gone on to appear in numerous films and guest starring roles on television including a recurring role of Martin Dewey, the LA County Coroner, in *Flash Forward* (ABC). As a magician, Jonathan has appeared on Fox's *Masters of Illusion*, and as the host and judge on VH1's magic reality series, *Celebracadabra*. He also recently worked as technical advisor on *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone* (Warner Brothers), working with Steve Carell, Jim Carey, Alan Arkin, and Olivia Wilde as well as *Now You See Me* (Summit), working with Jesse Eisenberg, Dave Franco and Isla Fisher. He has hosted many other shows including Discovery Channel's *Miracle Hunters* and *Wired Nextfest*, Biography Channel's *Paranormal U.S.A.*, and Fine Living Network's *GreenWith Envy*. Currently, he hosts Equator HD's *Green Wheels*, now airing on the Halogen channel. Jonathan continues to work within the entertainment industry as an actor, television host, magician and as a creator/producer of projects for television and film in both the scripted and unscripted format.

### Valerie Dillman (Stacy Dietz)

Valerie Dillman grew up in Clayton California and attended The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. She is an award winning stage actress (LADCC: best lead performance: *Lulu*, LA WEEKLY: best supporting actress: *Anatol*) and has appeared in several TV shows including *Monday Mornings*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Weeds* and *Dexter* as well as the indie gangster film *Charlie Valentine*, and the thriller *Fracture*. Valerie is also a playwright. Her first play *Sarah's War*, was produced by the Levantine Cultural Center and received rave reviews during its run at the Hudson Theatre in Hollywood.

### Sascha Alexander (Ellen Taylor)

Sascha Alexander is an actress/writer who has been called "exceptional" "wildly moving" "amazing" "sexy" and "a force to be reckoned with." A graduate of the USC School of Theater in 2007, her original solo piece in the two-woman show *Naked and Crazy* was a Village Voice "Voice Choice" at the NYC Fringe Festival in 2012. She appears regularly on commercials and webseries and in original branded content for female comedy brand Comediva.com. In 2012 she was commissioned to write and develop the news/entertainment pilot *1000% Awesome*. She also appears as the lead in Lionsgate's *Married in a Year* and Scott Brown's six-million-view webseries *Blue Movies*. Her original sketches have been featured on Jezebel, Lemondrop, and FunnyorDie. You can find her work online with sketch partner Iselle Slome under the moniker of *ArthurorMartha*, or catch her at her blog [searchingstarvingstripping.tumblr.com](http://searchingstarvingstripping.tumblr.com)

### John Getz (Don Tarzia)

John Getz has appeared in numerous movies, TV shows and plays. He has worked with many of the most accomplished directors in film. He has appeared in David Fincher's *Zodiac* and *The Social Network* plus the Coen Brothers' *Blood Simple*. Other notable film credits include *The Fly*, *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead*. He has dozens of TV credits including *Mad Men*, *How I Met Your Mother* and the role of Jack Tripper's brother, Lee, on *Three's Company*. In New York City, he appeared in *Macbeth* at the New York Shakespeare Festival at Lincoln Center, the first production of the musical, *The Robber Bridegroom* and on Broadway in *M. Butterfly* and *They're Playing our Song*. He will soon be seen in the role of Steve Job's father, Paul, in the upcoming movie, *Jobs*.



**Desperate Acts of Magic was shot over eighteen months, shooting a day or two each month, while co-directors Joe and Tammy worked full-time jobs to save up money for each shoot.**

### *About the Production*

*Desperate Acts of Magic* was inspired by Joe Gold's experience as a professional magician, performing over 500 kid's birthday parties, and entering numerous magic competitions. Joe wanted an authentic magic movie, showing great magic performed by a cast of professional magicians. Like a great musical where the songs and the story are seamlessly intertwined, *Desperate Acts of Magic* does the same, mixing story and magic as one.

Production began at the 2010 International Brotherhood of Magicians annual convention in San Diego. He teamed up with his girlfriend/co-director, Tammy Caplan for their first directorial effort.

Joe and Tammy continued to shoot one or two days a month for the next eighteen months. Tammy and Joe handled casting, props, costumes, and location scouting, while working full-time jobs to save up money for each shoot day.

There were challenges to shooting over a long period of time. For example, Joe's car was used in several scenes in the movie. With one more car scene to go, Joe's car was rear-ended and totaled. They needed to find a matching titanium-colored 2000 Honda Civic with black stripes on the side. Although this may sound like a common car, it proved to be extremely difficult to find. They tried rental car places, picture car providers, used car lots, and Craigslist, but the car could not be found. Then one day, walking in his neighborhood, Joe saw an exact match. He ran up to the driver's window at a red light, and banged on his window, freaking out the driver who thought he was being car-jacked. Finally Joe and Tammy came up with an idea. They had a scene to shoot where they needed six audience members. So they put out a casting notice looking for actors who owned a titanium-colored 2000 Honda Civic with black stripes. Hundreds of actors submitted for the role offering various cars, including a blue Jaguar. Ultimately only one actor had an exact match and she was cast. But as backup, the other five audience members were all cast based on their similar colored cars.

Since most of the characters in the movie are magicians, many of whom have to perform magic, Joe and Tammy looked for professional magicians during casting. Having actual magicians on set gave an authenticity to the film. It was very important to Joe and Tammy that all the magic was performed with no special effects or camera tricks. The magicians also served as consultant when non-magician actors had to perform magic.

Casting the lead role of Stacy Dietz, the female street magician, proved to be challenging. Sadly, there are not many female magicians in the world and even fewer who have an acting background. Due to budget constraints and the long drawn out schedule, it was challenging to cast a magician outside of the Los Angeles area. Ultimately Joe and Tammy cast Valerie Dillman, an accomplished actress who had no magic background, but was excited to learn. Each month, Joe and Tammy would brainstorm methods for the magic with magic consultants, Tony Clark and David Regal. Then they would teach Valerie the magic, and she would practice diligently for each shoot.



***Desperate Acts of Magic* is the first U.S. narrative feature-length film to have a role of a female magician.**

### ***History of Women in Magic***

*Desperate Acts of Magic* is one of the only narrative films to ever portray the role of a female magician. Of course there have been magical female characters portrayed as witches. But seeing a woman as a performing magician is extremely rare. *The Red Spectre* (1907) is a 9-minute film that shows a caped woman battling a devil with magic tricks. And in the 1974 French film, *Celine and Julie Go Boating*, the character of Celine is a bohemian stage magician.

Women are always portrayed in the movies as assistants, but rarely magicians. Although not seen on the screen, women have been an important part of the history of magic.

The first female magician to perform professionally in the United States in the late 18th century was Mrs. John Brenon. Sadly, this expert sleight-of-hand artist's first name is not known. In the late 19th century, teenage Lulu Hurst gained nationwide fame with a vaudeville act where she threw large men across the stage and made chairs fly through the air. At the turn of the 20th century, Adelaide Hermann performed one of the most dangerous magic tricks of all time, the Bullet Catch, a trick that has killed thirteen magicians.

Female magicians made their mark on the early days of television. In 1939, Geri Larsen was the first woman to perform magic on television. Later in 1951, Dell O'Dell had her own TV show. Her props were made oversized to make her look shorter and more lady-like. Around the same time, Celeste Evans was a very popular female magician on USO tours and television shows such as *The Ed Sullivan Show*. She performed a straitjacket escape in nine seconds, winning her \$1000 on the game show, *To Tell The Truth*.

In 1984, Ariann Black, was the first young girl to attend Tannen's Magic Camp. When she arrived at the camp in Long Island, NY, she was almost sent back home to Canada. The camp leaders had mistakenly allowed her to register because they thought her name was a boy's name. Fortunately, they were able to make accommodations and allowed her to stay. Now, every year there are girls at Tannen's Magic Camp. One year later, in 1985, Melinda Saxe, became the first female magician to perform in Las Vegas. Around the same time, Dorothy Dietrich became the first woman to escape from a straitjacket while hanging hundreds of feet in the air from a burning rope.

Female Magicians made more strides in the 1990's. Britain's most famous magic organization, The Magic Circle, had been male-only since 1905 but in 1991, they finally allowed women to join. Jade became the first woman to win the Gold Medal at the International Brotherhood of Magicians Stage Competition. In 1997, Juliana Chen became the first woman to win Gold at the World Congress of Magicians (FISM), the highest distinction for any magician in what is known as the "Olympics" of Magic.

In 2013, *Desperate Acts of Magic* will be released. This movie is the first U.S. narrative feature-length film to have a role of a female magician. The lead role of Stacy Dietz, played by Valerie Dillman, is a strong, talented, magician who has been spit out by the male-dominated magic establishment, leaving her to fend for herself on the street passing the hat to tourists.



***Desperate Acts of Magic Credits***  
***Cast (in order of appearance)***

Opening Credits Magician	Farrell Dillon
Jason	Joe Tyler Gold
Lou	William Salyers
Female Client	Linnea Liu Dakin
Stacy Dietz	Valerie Dillman
Arnie Deal	Jordi Caballero
Steve Kramer	Jonathan Levit
Jack	Hiawatha Johnson, Jr.
Skip	Cameron Sanders
Brenda	Tammy Caplan
Waitress	Tania Getty
Bewildered Man	Bill Krauss
Tom	Tom Ogden
Bruce	Bruce Perovich
Geoff	Rob Zabrecky
Man in Straightjacket	Eric Buss
Freak Show Artist	William Draven
Randy	Felix Ryan
Ellen Taylor	Sascha Alexander
Heckler	William Brasington
Don Tarzia	John Getz
The Raven	Stephen Wastell
Magician Michael	Michael E. Johnson
George	Zachary Kanner
Young Stacy	Victoria Bohush
Nathan	Nathan Burton
Clown	Keith Saltojanes
Bernie	Chris LoPrete
Sultan of Sorcery	Dave Cox
Brian Gillis	Brian Gillis
Aneiszka	Aneiszka Sea
Peggy	Melanie Merkosky
Peggy's Boyfriend	Richard Lewandowski
Magician #1	Henry Springer
Magician #2	Gregg Pasterick
Magician #3	Neil McGowan
Mel	John Combs



## *Desperate Acts of Magic Credits* *Crew*

Director	Tammy Caplan & Joe Tyler Gold
Writer	Joe Tyler Gold
Producer	Tammy Caplan & Joe Tyler Gold
Director of Photography	Brian Taylor
Editor	Tammy Caplan & Joe Tyler Gold
Composer	Bruce Kiesling
Lead Magic Consultants	David Regal, Tony Clark
Executive Producer	Marvin and Barbara Gold
1st Assistant Director	M.L. Wills
2 <sup>nd</sup> Camera Operators	John DeFazio, Chris Walters
Additional Photography	Peter Bohush, Christopher Jackson
First Assistant Camera	Taylor Beumel, Stephen Tringali, Dan Cooper
Sound Mixer	Neal Doxsee
Additional Sound Mixers	Mike Martin, Jordan Hood Taylor, Ernest Saunders
Gaffers	Chris Patterson, Trevor Elliott, Chris Walters, Tommy Brown, Tommy Gallagher
Electric	Tim Hogle
Grips	Shane Schoeppner, Brian Swenson, Tory Dahlhoff, Greg Simone, John Leach, Kyle Helf, Joe Hill, James Demuth, Mason Semble, Roger Peterson
Theatre Lighting	Genevieve Pickard
Additional Magic Consultants	Dominique Rodriguez, Brandon Baruch, Michael Ricks
Quick-Change Costume Designer	Eric Buss, Jonathan Levit, Nathan Burton, Nick Dopuch, Chris Korn, Brian Gillis, Nolan Haims
Seamstress	Christian Svenson
Wardrobe Supervisor	Diana Tronix
Production Assistants	Todd Silver
Still Photographer	Nicole Braucher, Nick Oleksiw, Tamara Loraine, Christopher Ming, Nima Sepassi
Studio Teacher	Christopher Jackson
Catering	Randy Hoffman
Sound Design & Mix	Too Tasty Catering, Critics Choice Catering, Katie Knight
Sound Editor	Cliff Calabro [HotPixel Post]
Colorist	Brennan Gerle
D.I. Supervisor/On-Line Editor Art Freed	Bruce Goodman [HotPixel Post]
Driving Music	“3030” performed by Ultramunx, Written by Gary Vail and Ultramunx
Closing Credits Music	“Here Comes The Magic”, Performed by Bonecage, Written by Jeff Dutton