

# INVITATION TO A SUICIDE

## Synopsis

In the tradition of absurdist black comedies like the classic *Harold and Maude*, INVITATION TO A SUICIDE is about a man selling tickets to his own suicide to save his father's life.

Raised in an insular Polish immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn where his only future would be as a poor baker like his father, Kaz Malek attempts to steal from a Russian mobster and run away. Not cut out for a life of crime, he ends up owing \$10,000 to the mobster instead, who threatens to kill his father if he doesn't pay.

Unable to pay or face his father's death, Kaz comes up with a novel plan: he'll hang himself and sell tickets to the show. He'd rather be a dead hero than a living loser with the guilt of his father's death hanging over his head. Kaz is surprised to find both the mobster and the neighborhood extremely supportive of this idea, not to mention his father.

But even if he can sell the tickets will he really go through with it? By the time this dark comedy reaches its surprising conclusion, Kaz learns that sometimes embracing death is the only way to a better life.

## LOREN MARSH

### Biography

**Loren Marsh** wrote, produced and directed the acclaimed short film *"Virginity"* starring Amanda Peet (*The Whole Nine Yards, Saving Silverman, Jack and Jill*) that played at the **Berlin Film Festival**, the **Telluride Film Festival**, the **Los Angeles Independent Film Festival** and the **Hamptons Film Festival** among many others around the world. While *"Virginity"* was traveling the festival circuit, Loren accepted a graduate fellowship from Stanford University. After receiving his master's degree in Latin and Ancient Greek, Loren wrote, produced and directed *Mission*, a CinemaScope feature set in the Mission District of San Francisco starring Joshua Leonard and recently released by Vanguard. Loren also wrote the Sundance 2005 short film *"The Youth in Us"* directed by Joshua Leonard. *Invitation to a Suicide*, his second feature as writer, producer and director, had its world premiere at the AFI Los Angeles Film Festival in November 2004.

## INVITATION TO A SUICIDE

Cast and Crew Biographies

**Pablo Schreiber as Kaz.** Pablo starred in the Sundance 2003 selection *The Mudge Boy* produced by Stanley Tucci and Showtime and was a regular on the HBO series *The Wire*.

**Katherine Moennig as Eva.** Kate was a series regular on the WB show *The Young Americans*, as well as a guest lead on *Law and Order*. She also appeared in the independent film *Love the Hard Way* and the Miramax release *The Shipping News*. She is currently starring in the Showtime series *The L Word*.

**David Margulies as Roman.** David's long resume begins in the 70's with such roles as Michael Caine's psychiatrist in Brian DePalma's *Dressed to Kill* and the mayor in the *Ghostbusters* films. He has also starred in *All That Jazz*, *9 & 1/2 Weeks*, *Running on Empty*, *Ace Ventura Pet Detective*, Woody Allen's *Celebrity* and the Broadway hit *Angels In America*. He appears on *The Sopranos* as Tony's lawyer.

**John Zorn, composer.** John was a founding member and saxophonist of the group Naked City and composed all of the ensemble's original compositions. In recent years, Zorn has written film scores for movies (including the recent *Trembling before G\_d*), and has composed dozens of works for a remarkable range of instrumentation, from classical chamber ensembles to big bands of 'downtown' New York improvisers.

**Jacob Craycroft, Editor.** Jacob has edited over fourteen features including the Fox Searchlight release and Sundance selection *Super Troopers*, *Breath Control: The History of the Human Beat Box* and the Zeitgeist release *Ram Dass: Fierce Grace*. He also edited the Academy Award winning short *Helicopter*.

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## 'Suicide' Invites Us To Laugh At Death

By Daniel Lehman

We've seen the setup a thousand times before: desperate man taps a friend to pick the lock and stand watch while he slips into the apartment and grabs the cash. They split the money and the man runs off to live the good life in California with the girl next door.

But the moment Kaz Malek (Pablo Schreiber) appears on screen, we know that everything is about to go very wrong. With his well-intentioned bungling and goofy smile, Kaz is the type of whipping boy that black comedies thrive on, and "Invitation to a Suicide" is no exception.

Once inside, Kaz promptly works his spastic magic, and within moments he and Marcin (Marcin Gajowczyk) are forced to flee as both apartment and money go up in flames. Life quickly goes from bad to worse when Russian mobster Ferfichkin (Joseph Urla) returns to find the burnt remains of his money. Ferfichkin wastes no time in tracking down the duo, killing Marcin and delivering his ultimatum - Kaz gets him the \$10,000 by the next day or his father becomes Ferfichkin's next victim. With no one to borrow from and no way to make the money in time, Kaz decides to sell the only thing he has - his life.

Convincing Ferfichkin to give him a few extra days, Kaz begins marketing his suicide with the help of his friend Krsyztof (Matthew Rauch), owner of the neighborhood funeral home. As the preparations continue and word of the plan spreads, Kaz finds himself becoming a local hero, even gaining the admiration of his hard-nosed father (David Margulies), who thinks Kaz is finally doing his part to save the family bakery. The only dissenter is Eva (Katherine Moennig), the girl of his dreams who is only now starting to pay attention to him. With the big day approaching and his celebrity growing, Kaz has to decide whose priorities to follow before time runs out.

Aided by sharp writing and John Zorn's superb score, the film moves along at a steady clip, and the witty interplay between the characters keeps the humor coming, neatly sidestepping the slower moments that might put its darkly comic tone in jeopardy. In Mr. Urla's hands, Ferfichkin isn't the stereotypical mobster thug, but a charismatic businessman who happens to trade in death. Swapping stories with Kaz and offering pointers with casual ease, the pair's chemistry at times verges on that of a buddy comedy - until we're reminded of why Kaz is killing himself in the first place. Imbuing Kaz with dimwitted charm and an adamant - albeit clumsy - desire to do the right thing, Mr. Schreiber gives us a character we can cheer for and provides the perfect foil to Mr. Urla's Ferfichkin.

Laced with healthy doses of black humor and morbid one-liners, "Invitation to a Suicide" encourages us to laugh at death. Instead of tiptoeing around the subject or giving in to the temptation to turn the film into a moral story, director Loren Marsh takes every available opportunity to mock death, putting Kaz through increasingly degrading trials at every turn. By keeping the absurdity at full tilt, Marsh leaves every possibility wide open, and we're free to enjoy Kaz's mishaps, sensing that he could stumble into salvation by some bizarre twist of fate any moment.

And perhaps that's what Marsh is really trying to tell us - beyond the dark humor and irreverence, the film is as much about living as it is about dying. With his death in sight, Kaz is finally motivated to begin taking responsibility and living his life. By embracing his death, he's free to see his life for what it was - nothing can hold him back anymore. Things still might not go his way, but that's not what matters anymore - the fact that he stood up and tried is what counts. But at heart, "Invitation to a Suicide" is still a twisted comedy about death. Gritty looking and filled with gallows humor, it's too sick to be saccharine, and thus celebrates life in a way that most so-called "inspirational films" cannot. It takes our cynicism and points it back at us - by mocking death, it serves as an affirmation of life.

"Invitation to a Suicide"

Written and Directed by Loren Marsh

AFI Film Festival runs Nov 4-14 at the Arclight Cinemas in Hollywood

# Invitation to a Suicide

## Cast and Crew List

### CAST (In Order of Appearance):

Pablo Schreiber	Kaz Malek
Marcin Gajowczyk	Marcin
Tobi Kanter	Snuff Film Victim
Katherine Moennig	Eva
Stephen Aronson	Eva's father
David Margulies	Roman Malek
Joseph Urla	Ferfichkin
Edward Band	Vlad
Stan Carp	Officer Schmidt
Matthew Rauch	Krzysztof
Patty O'Brien	Mourner
Alexander Scott	Manhattan Guy
Marika Dominczyk	Manhattan Woman
Michael Orsino	Brooklyn Kid
Brandon Reilly	Blonde Kid
Matthew Sliwinka	Polish Kid
Herbert Rogers	Kidney Patient
Zenon Kruszelnicki	Delivery Man
Robert Elmes	Bartender
Nick Raio	Cop #1
Ray Seiden	Cop #2
Ari Gold	Loren "Ari" Marsh
Edward Szala	Accordion Player
Ben Wang	Doctor
Sebastian Siedlecki	Pavel

### CREW:

Written, Produced and Directed by	Loren Marsh
Director of Photography	Christopher Norr
Editor	Jacob Craycroft
Music	John Zorn
Production Designer	Erin Muldoon Stetson
Costume Designer	Teresa Duncan
Line Producers	Nicky Akmal
1st Assistant Director	Julie Gonthier
2nd Assistant Director	Jeff Huston
2nd 2nd Assistant Director	Joseph Finkleman
Gaffer	Leo Chang
Grip	Steffen Unger
1st Assistant Camera/	Travis McQueen
Additional 2nd Unit Photography	Chris Reynolds
Script Supervisor	Jamie Courville

Sound Recording  
Boom Operator  
Stunt Coordinator  
Wardrobe Supervisor  
Makeup Artist  
Makeup provided by  
Art Director  
Prop Master  
Art Department Production Assistant  
Polish Community Liaison  
Casting Consultant  
Additional Casting  
Storyboard Assistance  
Locations Assistance  
Production Assistants

Jared Hohl  
Jeremy Frindel  
Manny Siverio  
Suzan Burdan  
Sharon Sinclair  
M.A.C.  
Mary Fredrickson  
Nicole Martinson  
Rosa Jurjevics  
Marcin Gajowczyk  
Susan Shopmaker  
Tobi Kanter  
Pat Whalen  
Dan Clark  
Anne Marie Wilmot  
Eric Jacob  
Peter Stepien  
Camille Acey  
Steven Pattison  
Joshua Rothenberger  
D. Lexington Haverly  
Jeremy Frindel  
Ted Gannon  
Kevin Walsh  
Jenny Lowe  
Jenny LaNicca  
Ted Malong  
Ted Gannon  
Eddie McShane  
Gary Arnold, Gary's Chop Shop

Assistant Editor  
Organ Music  
Additional Music  
Additional Dialogue  
Web Site Design  
Title Design  
Web Site Programming  
Sound Design  
Sound Design Assistant  
Sound Editing, Design and Mix by

THANKS TO:

Mark Tyler  
George Rush  
Susan Shopmaker  
Tim Williams  
Diana Williams  
Adam Marsh  
Gerald and Evelyn Marsh  
Ari Gold  
Kevin Walsh  
Alex Reiter  
Fred Stesney  
125 Green Street  
Bowen Dwelle  
Cassandra Gero  
Robert Elmes and Galapagos  
Donal O'Ceilleachair and Ocularis  
Sasha Waters  
Alicia Krueger  
Jason Dietz and Katie Fleischer  
David Margulies

Jason Newman  
Hal Hartley  
Amir Naderi  
Austin Chick  
Rosa Bordallo  
Zenon Kruszelnicki  
Vicki Margulies  
David Margulies  
Jedd Ehrmann  
Matthew Schuerman  
Simone Ghetti  
Joshua Leonard  
Wiebke Wachmann  
Ahrie Moon  
Pete Nash  
Rzeszowska Bakery  
Surya Restaurant  
John Smolenski Funeral Home  
Evergreen Funeral Home  
Ludwig Kamionka  
Enid's Bar  
Lomzynianka Restaurant  
J. Josephs Sons  
To The Point Tattoo  
Staropolski Meat Market  
Carmen Ramos  
Pal TV East  
Mike Buckner at Image Group Post  
Blackbird Post  
Gary's Chop Shop  
Subvoyant  
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