



Title: *Max Bishop*

Genre: Crime/Comedy

Duration: 84 mins

Logline: An unemployed hitman finds work as a janitor at the local elementary school.

Synopsis: Max is trying to be a hitman. But like any aspiring entrepreneur, business can go south. Without a contract and in need of a job, Max finds work as a janitor at the local elementary school. While Max tries to make sense of his new, murder-free environment, he finds himself under the surveillance of Lucy, a 10-year-old student who knows about Max's prior occupation and wants to hire him to knock off her class bully: Ruby McCallister. Wanting nothing more than to be a hitman, Max accepts the contract... but something is stirring inside him. As Max and Lucy's worlds collide, and low rent mobsters become entangled in the hit, Max must choose between fulfilling his hitman dreams and recognizing the humanity of his target. *Max Bishop* is a dark comedy for the whole family.

Cast

Chris Charais...Max
 Iris Seifert...Lucy
 Katie Troske...Ruby
 Joel Thingvall...Sal
 Don Peterson...Don
 Timothy Meinke...Principal Warta
 Rachel Grubb...Ms. Partridge
 Douglas Sydney...Mr. Hubert
 Alan Fiene...Sergio
 Bruce Purcell...The Stranger
 Benny Barrett...Sam Smith
 Paul Economon...Mr. Charlie
 Derek Dirlam...Captain Costello

Crew

Writer/Director...Jack Beranek
 Cinematographer...Billy Straub
 Original Score...Andrew Hanson
 Assistant Director...Kevin Ackley
 Art Director...Kirstie House
 1st AC...Ellie Drews
 2nd AC / Gaffer...Jack Guggisberg
 Production Sound Mixer...Benjamin Roembach-Clark
 Sound Mixers...Ian McClintock and Avry Lou
 Producers...Jack Beranek
 Steven Sherman
 Chris Charais
 Jamie Heisler

Director's Statement

Being born and raised about as far away from the film world as one can get, people like myself often wonder how to get closer. The best advice, it seems, is to just start making movies any way you can.

With *Max Bishop*, I wanted to make a movie that didn't follow a narrative path so much as a path that emphasized a strange, off-kilter world and the ever-growing cast of odd characters who seemingly exist to confound Max.

This is the type of cinema that excites me. I invite you to spend some time with us in Max's world.

Jack Beranek

About the Film

While *Max Bishop* has glimmers of a traditional narrative, the movie's *raison d'être* is to explore the strange world in which Max lives, along with the strange characters who inhabit this world. The screenplay for *Max Bishop* was written over the summer of 2017 with a handful of roles



written for actors who writer/director Jack Beranek had worked with in the past. Pre-production lasted from September, 2017 through April, 2018, a period that allowed the team to take its time finding locations and resources that were appropriate for the film's style and accommodating to microbudget filmmaking. *Max Bishop* was filmed on location in Beranek's hometown of New

Ulm, in southern Minnesota, from May 12 – May 24, 2018 and also on location in and around Minneapolis over ten days in June, July and August. After a location fell through, the team took its time to find a worthy replacement and reconvened for five final days of production from October 6 – 10, 2018 in Franklin, MN, the hometown of co-producer Steven Sherman. Beranek began editing the movie in the fall of 2018, a process that continued into the following year, with sound mixing and color grading finalized in summer 2020.

Cinematic Influences

Max Bishop was written, designed, photographed and edited with very specific cinematic influences in mind.

When writing the screenplay, writer/director Jack Beranek was heavily influenced by the dark comedy of Irving Lerner's 1957 film *Murder by Contract*. "Business as murder," said Beranek, "That's what I got from *Murder by Contract* and that's what I wanted to write with *Max Bishop*."

Before Beranek had finished the screenplay, he knew many of the scenes would play out in long shot, long takes to render the comedic, absurd world he was imagining. While designing the film, the team looked at the films of Jacques Tati, Aki Kaurismaki, and Jean-Pierre Melville.

In the case of Jacques Tati, Beranek noted how the filmmaker primarily utilized long shot, long takes and would stage more than one gag in different places of the screen at the same time. In the case of Kaurismaki, Beranek noted the director's deadpan staging and framing of actors within medium and long shots. And in the case of Melville, Beranek praised the director's precise and exacting visual style. A style, Beranek says, they wanted to reimagine "and then let our characters behave in their strange, strange ways within that visual style."



About the Filmmakers

Jack Beranek (Writer/Director) - Jack has had a passion for cinema since childhood and at the age of 17 he wrote and directed his first feature film *Health Freaks*. Upon its theatrical premiere, Jack was invited to write a sidebar for Lloyd Kaufman's bestseller *Direct Your Own Damn Movie*. Since graduating from MSU Moorhead in 2012, Jack has worked for Film Independent in Los Angeles, co-founded the video production company Flying Buttress Media in southern Minnesota and has written/directed three short films including *Daytimers* on which he worked with future *Max Bishop* collaborators including lead actor Chris Charais, cinematographer Billy Straub and others.

Billy Straub (Cinematographer) – Originally from Lindstrom, MN, Billy Straub has shot films and music videos in Los Angeles, England, and his home state of Minnesota. After graduating from MSU Moorhead in 2012, Billy dove into the Minneapolis production scene on commercials and films while developing his skills as a gaffer and camera assistant. During that time Billy was also taking on the role of cinematographer on films like *Some Calming Music*, *A Good Cigar*, *The Long Goodbye* and music videos for the Swiss band Howlong Wolf. After first collaborating in film school, Billy and Jack Beranek reconnected to make the short film *Daytimers* three years before reteaming on *Max Bishop*.

Kirstie House (Art Director) - Kirstie graduated from Bethel University with a Bachelor's degree in Media Communication with an emphasis in Production. She spent a semester in Los Angeles studying film at Los Angeles Film Studies Center (LAFSC). During her time in LA, she specialized in production design and acting, and had an internship at a prestigious talent agency in Santa Monica. She is now one of the Media Producers for the Twin Cities Film Fest and does freelance video work with her co-producer Ellie Drews under their company The Producers Short Films LLC. She was the Assistant Director for the 2017 Minneapolis 48 Hour Film Challenge Best of Fest Film *Contractions* and was nominated for Best Production Design at the 2018 Z-Fest Film Festival for her work on GreyDuck Productions short film *Hostess*.

Kevin Ackley (Assistant Director) - Kevin is a filmmaker in Fargo, ND, where he co-owns Chamber Six Media, a partnership that produces videos and short films. Chamber Six Media has produced a wide array of award-winning work, ranging from a 33 minute documentary about the closing of an underground music venue (*The New Direction*) to a 10 minute psychological thriller (*Eviction*) to a colorful 2 minute drama (*Fine Line*), with several more projects on the horizon. Most recently, Kevin wrote/directed the short thriller *Michael!* Kevin was brought onboard *Max Bishop* after he and Jack Beranek reconnected several years after film school.

Ellie Drews (1st AC) – Ellie is a cinematographer, editor and grip in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Ellie's work takes her from the sets of feature films, short films and documentaries in addition to freelance video work for Best Buy, Walgreens and American Swedish Institute as well as smaller companies around the Twin Cities. Ellie also produces video content with her co-producer Kirstie House under their company The Producers Short Films LLC. Her goal as a filmmaker is to continue to be part of locally made films and develop a career that focuses on documentary style video work.

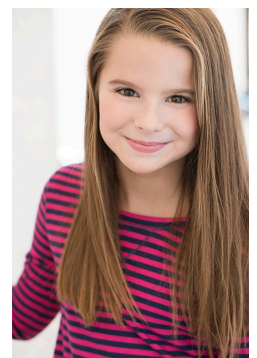
About the Cast

Chris Charais (Max Bishop) – Chris Charais has trained extensively with some of the most respected acting coaches in the United States including the Will Wallace Acting Company of Los Angeles, the Rich Remedios in Meisner Technique Training, Billy Cooper, Jr. and Michael Curran-Dorsano. Chris has played the lead role in films including *Soul Survivors*, *Lucked Out* and *Anathema*, among others. After first collaborating with writer/director Jack Beranek on the ensemble short film *Daytimers*, Chris and Jack reteamed three years later for *Max Bishop*.



Iris Seifert (Lucy) – Iris has been acting for several years and has had supporting and starring roles in shorts, feature films, commercials and promotional content. Iris has shared scenes with Milo Gibson and Abigail Hawk in the feature film *Brother's Keeper* from Winter State Entertainment. Additional acting credits include *Relativity*, *Devil's Night* and the TV-movie *Badland Wives*. As of 2019, Iris says her favorite role has been Lucy in *Max Bishop* and she can't wait for the world to meet this character.

Katie Troske (Ruby) - Katie has enjoyed acting since she was 5 years old and has spent her summers participating in workshops at Children's Theatre Company, Stages, and Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. She loves storytelling in all forms including photography, videos, and stop motion. In addition to university film productions, voice-over and on-line media work, Katie has had the opportunity to play opposite Rachael Harris and Matthew Glave in the upcoming *International Falls*, a dark comedy filmed in Minnesota and Los Angeles. Katie was thrilled to be part of *Max Bishop* and enjoyed the challenge of bringing Ruby's unique character to life. Outside of acting, Katie loves writing, swimming, horseback riding, and art



About the Cast (continued)

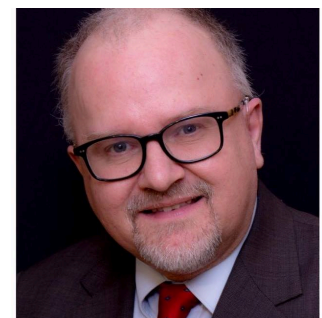
Joel Thingvall (Sal) - Thingvall is a Midwest based character actor who has performed in more than 100 plays and 100 films in a career spanning five decades. He has had featured roles in *Insectula!*, *American Beast*, and *Remake*, all available on Amazon Prime. In his youth, Joel was an accomplished mime and an original member of the Minnesota Playwrights Lab. When not acting he reads and collects comic books. Joel first worked together writer/director Jack Beranek on the ensemble short film *Daytimers*. Three years later, they have reunited on *Max Bishop*.



Don Peterson (Don) - Growing up in Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota, Don enjoyed watching all sorts of movies and worked at the six-theater Movies at Maplewood (Minnesota) in high school. Years later, one of the sales consultants he worked with asked him, out of the blue, "Have you ever thought about acting?" Don's answer was "No." With this on his mind, Don started taking classes with the Lex-Ham Community Theater as well as classes at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. The training must have done its job as Don started getting cast in one short film after another and things have continued on from there. After first working with writer/director Jack Beranek on a proof-of-concept project, the two reunited five years later on *Max Bishop*.

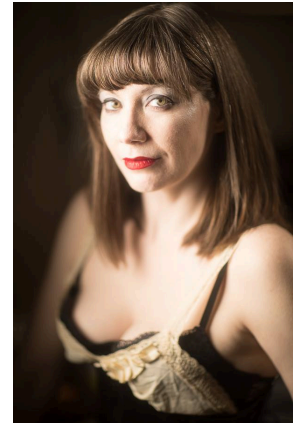


Timothy Meinke (Principal Warta) – Prior to starting his film career, Tim participated in many theater productions and developed an understanding of performance in comedy, musicals and drama. Tim started his film career in 2003 when he played a juror in *The Last Word*. Since then, Tim has followed his passion for filmmaking with roles in shorts and feature films such as *Turtle*, *Fall Into Me*, *Demon with the Atomic Brain* and *Doomed to Consume*, the latter of which he has described as his favorite set experience. Tim first worked with writer/director Jack Beranek in 2007-08 on the feature film *Health Freaks* in a supporting role. Ten years later, Tim was excited to reconnect with Jack on *Max Bishop*.



About the Cast (continued)

Rachel Grubb (Ms. Partridge) – Rachel is an actress from the Twin Cities area. She has done several films with Christopher R Mihm such as *Cave Women On Mars*, *Weresquito Nazi Hunter*, and *Queen of Snakes*. Recently, she wrote and starred in *Hammered* by JL Sosa. She won Best Breakthrough Screenplay for her script *Why Am I In A Box?* from the New York International Independent Film And Video Festival. She also won Best Supporting Actress in A Short Film from the International Filmmaker Festival of World Cinema. Rachel first worked with writer/director Jack Beranek on the feature film *Health Freaks* in 2007-08.



Douglas Sidney (Mr. Hubert) – Douglas is a professional Minneapolis-based actor and spokesperson in film, television, commercial, print, and voice. His experience includes on-camera hosting, spokesperson representation, film and television acting, and print media alongside professional voice ads, audio book narration, and product presentation. His feature and short film work for independent and studio releases include Gateway Films/Vision Video's *Until Forever*, Mechanically Separated Cinema's *The Weight of Darkness*, Avocado Refrigerator Studios' *Four Boxes*, and Rockford Road's proof of concept pilot for *The Domestics*. Commercial campaigns represented include Best Buy, Ford, Hersheys, Anytime Fitness, Target Corporation any many more.



Alan Fiene (Sergio) – Al has been acting for most of his life. Much of his work is on the stage and includes a national tour of *The Fantastiks* with Troupe America, a stint with the Commonwealth Theatre in Lanesboro, MN, and Summer Stock at Paul Bunyan Playhouse in Bemidji, MN. His film credits include *Harry Putter and the Sorcerer's Phone*, *Monday Morning*, *Night on Has Been Mountain* and *Health Freaks*, the latter being his first collaboration with writer/director Jack Beranek.

Bruce Purcell (The Stranger) Bruce Purcell has been an actor/performer since the age of 10 and has worked in stage, screen and television. He is also a musician and an acting coach. He settled in the Twin Cities after 30 years in Los Angeles where he worked in the entertainment industry in a variety of capacities, most notably as a producer/director where he garnered an Emmy nomination for one of his documentaries and was part of the launch team for three cable networks. He brings a tremendous knowledge of the entertainment industry which he will share with anyone within earshot, whether they ask him or not.

Screenshots from the Film



Screenshots from the Film



Screenshots from the Film



Behind the Scenes





Lead actor Chris Charais (L) talking with writer/director Jack Beranek (R) between takes



(L to R) Katie Troske, Chris Charais, Jack Guggisberg, Benjamin Roembach-Clark