



# KEEPER

A SHORT FILM BY  
ONE-EYED RABBIT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

MEET JACOB

ABOUT ONE-EYED RABBIT

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

AWARDS & LAURELS

FROM THE WRITER

LINKS

FAQ

CREDITS



## LOGLINE

Two adult brothers are forced to renegotiate their tumultuous relationship after a traumatic accident leaves one of them disabled and the other must care for him.

## SYNOPSIS

After a traumatic accident leaves Caleb Armstrong with a rare neurological disorder rendering him nearly paralyzed, his older brother Marc takes on the role of his sole caretaker. As a way to deal with both the monotony and pressure of daily life with the now non-verbal Caleb, Marc escapes into his mind, replaying the day of the accident over and over again, desperately searching for what he could have done differently. Can Marc let go of his guilt from the past in order to forge a new bond with his brother in the present? Or will Marc remain locked-in to his mind just as Caleb is Locked-in to his body?

## RUN TIME

12 MIN, 57 SEC





# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

*Keeper* was an incredible challenge for me as a director. As I put together my team for the shoot, it became increasingly clear how many people are intimately connected to disability in ways one wouldn't have assumed (for myself, my mom was involved in a traumatic accident when I was eight-years-old, forcing her to teach herself how to walk again). And so, capturing the characters' daily reality in as honest a way as possible, however uncomfortable, became a top priority of mine.

I also knew early on that the scenes in the past and the scenes in the present needed to be shot separately, with a significant amount of time in between shoots. Although it would inevitably add to our already strained budget, this would allow the actors to change their appearance, provide time to explore the unique and specific physical relationship between Marc and Caleb, and more importantly it would give us the ability to create entirely different worlds, both in front of and behind the camera, on each day. These efforts, combined with the hard work and focus of an entirely non-male crew, helped create the environment needed to tell such a sensitive story.

*Keeper* asks us to consider “What responsibility do we owe to our family members who most desperately need our assistance?” and “How can trauma be used as a catalyst for positive change in our lives?”

**-MAREN LAVELLE** (DIRECTOR, CO-WRITER, PRODUCER)





# MEET JACOB



"I was honored to share my insights with the writers, director, actors, and the props department. It was a wonderful experience being able to educate the creators on how to make sure that everything was authentic as possible...[the filmmakers] have created something fantastic and moving. It's so fucking good and real, it's crazy."

**-Jacob Haendel** (Locked-In Survivor & Keeper Story Consultant)

JACOB HAENDEL is a survivor, advocate, motivator, and writer living in the Boston Massachusetts area. He is the only documented case of recovery from Stage 4 Toxic Acute Progressive Leukoencephalopathy as well as Locked-In Syndrome. Jacob is dedicated to educating people on the devastating effects of debilitating illness such as LIS and opiate addiction, and has been documenting his own recovery with his YouTube channel and personal blog.

Website: [jhaendelrecovery.com](http://jhaendelrecovery.com)





# ABOUT ONE EYED RABBIT



**One-Eyed Rabbit is an NYC-based production company founded and run by Maren Lavelle and Matt Steiner. We create original work that offers new perspectives through character-driven narratives in order to illuminate the full scope of our shared humanity.**

On top of being writing and producing partners, Maren and Matt are life partners too. We write every project together, with Matt often focusing on the initial idea and structuring of the story, while Maren contributes to world-building, specificity of dialogue, and fleshing out the characters. Maren directs and Matt always has an acting role within the film.

OER's style consists of intimate, personal stories that exist within dynamic and playful structures. Our films are driven by complex protagonists at a precipice in their lives and we're interested in shining a light on characters who aren't typically in the spotlight of mainstream narratives.



# CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



**MAREN LAVELLE** (DIRECTOR, CO-WRITER, PRODUCER) is a Brooklyn-based director, writer, and producer. A graduate of Pace University's BFA Acting Program, and an original member of the José Rivera Writer's Group, Maren's plays have premiered in various venues in NYC: *Composition of a Woman* (Westside Theatre, 440 Lafayette Studios), *The Holding Room* (The Sheen Center). Maren's screenwriting and directing are featured in the short films *The Yard* (2019) and *Beyond Bone* (2018). In 2020, Maren co-wrote and directed the short films *Maya* and *Keeper*. Website: [marenlavelle.com](http://marenlavelle.com)



**MATT STEINER** (CO-WRITER, PRODUCER, "MARC") is an NYC-based actor, writer, and producer. As an actor, Matt has toured the country, performed Off-Broadway, and in film & television. From 2012-2017, Matt served as the Co-Artistic Director of The Representatives, a site-specific theater company, producing and starring in over 15+ original productions. Matt's writing credits include the horror comedy short *The Thing I Never Told You* as well as the pilot script for the detective dramedy *Little Dick*, which was a Second Rounder at the 2019 Austin Film Festival Screenwriting Competition. Website: [themarvelousmrmatt.com](http://themarvelousmrmatt.com)



**CHRISTOPHER HARRAL** ("CALEB") is an NYC-based artist with a BFA in Acting from Pace University and additional training with the Barrow Group. Credits include: *Out of the Blue*: OSN (International tour), *Veritas* (The Representatives, NYC), *Charlotte's Web* (TWUSA). Film/TV: *Grave Mysteries*, *Speed Run* (NYSFF Winner). Apart from acting, Christopher also works as a DP and Editor for small projects around the city. All credit to Jesus Christ. Instagram: [@chrisjharral](https://www.instagram.com/chrisjharral)





# AWARDS & LAURELS



# FROM THE WRITER



My brother is the toughest person I know. In addition to having trained with some of the world's best Mixed Martial Arts fighters, he has also been living with Schizoaffective Disorder for most of his life.

I witnessed firsthand how my brother's mental illness took a toll both on him as well as our father, who became his de facto caretaker. And as my father's health declined, I also saw how my brother went from being the one receiving care to the one actually giving it.

Although the writing of *Keeper* began as a way for me to explore my fear about how my relationship with my brother might change in my father's absence, it quickly became a tribute to the complex, layered, and ultimately loving relationship that he and I have always had, and an acknowledgement of how much closer we had become now that our father was gone.

My hope for this film is to shine a light on the experience of the often invisible care workers that give aide to the most vulnerable among us, as well as to honor the familial bonds that keep us together especially during our darkest days.

**-MATT STEINER** (CO-WRITER, PRODUCER, "MARC")





# LINKS

ONE-EYED RABBIT

[one-eyedrabbit.com](http://one-eyedrabbit.com)

KEEPER OFFICIAL WEBPAGE

[one-eyedrabbit.com/keeper](http://one-eyedrabbit.com/keeper)

FACEBOOK

[shorturl.at/cht68](http://shorturl.at/cht68)

INSTAGRAM

[@\\_keepersshortfilm](https://www.instagram.com/_keepersshortfilm)

IMDB PAGE

[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13799944/?ref\\_=nm\\_flmg\\_act\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13799944/?ref_=nm_flmg_act_1)

PRODUCTION STILLs

[shorturl.at/ksNP0](http://shorturl.at/ksNP0)

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/619023408>



# FAQ

## Q: WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT WHEN YOU WERE BUILDING YOUR TEAM?

A: The connection to the material was the driving force behind our hiring choices. We could tell someone was a good fit for *Keeper* when they took the material into their own hands, bringing their own interpretations to the script. Several of our crew members had intimate connections to disability and traumatic brain injuries which informed how we approached the material on set. Maren also worked (successfully) to have a production crew entirely comprised of non-men, which contributed to an intense focus that was necessary to tackle the ambitious filming schedule.

## Q: WHO IS JACOB HAENDEL?

A: Jacob Haendel is a remarkable person who served as our Story Consultant on *Keeper*. Jacob is the only documented case of recovery from Stage 4 Toxic Acute Progressive Leukoencephalopathy as well as Locked-In Syndrome. We would chat with Jacob on Zoom for hours about his experiences being in locked-in, we'd go through moments in our script together, and he even lent us his actual recovery equipment for filming. He's an all-around great guy who had a huge impact on our film.

## Q: WHAT KIND OF WORK DID THE ACTORS DO TO PREPARE FOR THEIR ROLES?

A: To prepare for the first part of filming (flashbacks) both Chris and Matt did extensive body work: dieting, weightlifting, high-intensity interval training, etc. to look and feel like the younger, more active versions of the characters. And then, for the second part of filming (present), both actors put on some extra pounds and grew their hair out to show the passage of time. Maren also held rehearsals with the actors to work on their physicality and to create a unique "language" between the characters, since present-day Caleb is non-verbal and there's very little traditional dialogue in those scenes.

# FAQ

## **Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?**

A: THE BUDGET. Wow, what a learning experience! We thought this film could be done for \$5,000 and we were so wrong. Because we wanted to prioritize paying our collaborators fair wages, and the decision to film the past and the present with six weeks in between them, the film ended up costing us \$15,000, all of which came from our personal savings. But, in the end, it was totally worth it.

## **Q: WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING THAT HAPPENED WHILE FILMING?**

A: Hands down the craziest thing that happened while filming was that we almost got shut down on Day 1 of production because we were accidentally filming on state park land and didn't realize it! We were chasing the sun, had only a couple of shots left (but ones that were incredibly important to the story), when a park ranger came up to us and asked us for our permit, which we didn't have. Luckily, Maren is not only a brilliant director and writer, but she somehow talked her way out of it (even when a second park ranger came up to us!) and we were able to finish filming for the day. But, for a minute, we were like, "That's it! We're done! We're not going to be able to finish our film!". It's funny to look back on now, but as it was happening it was terrifying!





# CREDITS

## CAST

DIRECTED BY  
**MAREN  
LAVELLE**

MARC	MATT STEINER
CALEB	CHRISTOPHER HARRAL
NADINE (VOICE)	DACIA WASHINGTON

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
**LAUREN  
FLACK**

## PRODUCTION CREW

WRITTEN BY  
**MAREN  
LAVELLE  
&  
MATT  
STEINER**

DIRECTOR	MAREN LAVELLE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	LAUREN FLACK
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	JODI SAVITZ
ASSISTANT CAMERA	SAM TETRO
ASSISTANT CAMERA	JENNIFER LIU
GAFFER	MARINE BRION
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	AMANDA DEPREZ
SET DRESSER	SARA RICKWA
PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER	ANA FERNÁNDEZ
GRAPHIC DESIGNER	CYRO GARMATTER
STORY CONSULTANT	JACOB HAENDEL
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	CAROLYN BONACCORSI
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	DELANEY WILBUR

DIRECTOR OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
**JODI  
SAVITZ**

PRODUCED BY  
**ONE-EYED  
RABBIT**

## POST PRODUCTION

EDITOR	JESS GREEN
SOUND EDITOR	ADRIAN BOSI
COMPOSER	LILLIE McDONOUGH
COLORIST	PATRICE BOWMAN

ORIGINAL SCORE BY  
**LILLIE  
McDONOUGH**

