



PRODUCTION NOTES  
LAST DITCH PICTURES  
*presents*



# SPECIAL NEEDS



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**CAUTION: REALITY CAN BE PAINFULLY FUNNY**

## STARRING

Isaak James    Eva James    Michael C. Kricfalusi  
Jared Morgenstern    Randall Middleton  
Sabina Maschi    Brian Whisenant

*“To say that Special Needs is funny would be the understatement of the year” - T. Rigney, The Film Fiend*

# ***SPECIAL NEEDS***

(GENERAL INFORMATION)

**Running Time:**

88 min

**Shooting Format:**

MiniDV

**Film Festivals:**

Official Selection, Calgary International Fringe Film Festival, Aug. 2006

Official Selection, Westwood International Film Festival, Oct. 2006

**Director & Website:**

Isaak James

<http://isaakjames.com/>

**Producers:**

Isaak James

Eva James

Michael C. Kricfalusi

**Production Company & Website**

[Last Ditch Pictures](#)

**Distributor**

[Troma Entertainment](#)

**Website:**

[www.specialneedsthemovie.com](http://www.specialneedsthemovie.com)

**IMDB Listing:**

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0847219/>

**MySpace:**

<http://www.myspace.com/specialneedsthemovie>

# ***SPECIAL NEEDS TRAILER*** **TO BE AIRED ON** **IFC'S MEDIA LAB**



**New York, March 16, 2007** -- Last Ditch Pictures is pleased to announce that the "Special Needs Trailer" has been selected to appear on IFC's *Media Lab Shorts Uploaded*. The half-hour program was created by IFC to highlight the best short films uploaded to their [Media Lab site](#). The program airs on Monday, April 2nd at 8:30 pm eastern time on IFC. The trailer will be the last short film of the 30 minute segment.

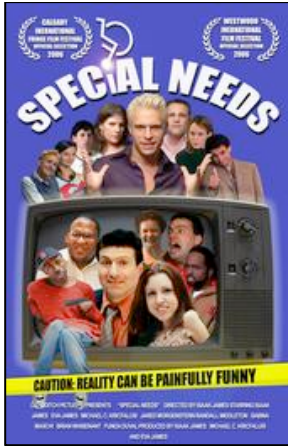
"I think this is a great opportunity to promote the film's upcoming release through Troma Entertainment," says Isaak James (producer & director of *Special Needs*)

# FILM FIEND

## Movie Review: *Special Needs*

Written by [T. Rigney](#)

Published April 02, 2007



If you're anything like me, you found that episode of *Life Goes On* where Corky burns down the family restaurant to be one of the funniest television moments in the history of the human race. I know it was supposed to be sad and depressing and gut-wrenching and blah blah blah, but I just couldn't help myself. My sides split instantly, my bladder emptied into my skin-tight black biker shorts, and I rolled around in my own sickly bodily fluids as I literally laughed myself into a stupor. I ultimately blame this forgotten series for my inability to take handicapped people on television seriously. To this day, whenever I witness Katie Couric delivering the nightly news all by herself, I lapse into violent fits of girlish giggles.

This could explain why I'm currently in love with actor/singer/writer/director Isaak James and his tastelessly hilarious mockumentary *Special Needs*, out on DVD this summer from Troma Entertainment. To list all the reasons why I adore this film would require lots of spare time, several reams of high-quality fax paper, and a giant green crayon the size of Mo'Nique's ultra-absorbent tampon. I will, however, try my best to rein it all in without dipping my review in a tub of ass-waxing hyperbole. The key word in that

sentence is "try," so I apologize in advance if things get out of control. After all, there's nothing quite like a comedy that delivers the goods in such an entertaining fashion.

*Special Needs* follows the exploits of veteran reality TV creator Warren Piece (James) and his quirky crew of overachieving producers and slacker personal assistants. His latest creation, appropriately titled *Handicaps*, is on the fast track to becoming yet another hit on the CNT network. Unfortunately for Warren, his time in the spotlight may be coming to a very abrupt end. Apparently his last production cost the network millions of dollars, and they're not about to let that sort of thing happen again. To make matters worse, the handicapped individuals who are showing up for the auditions aren't exactly choice cuts of meat, if you catch my drift. Can our hero overcome Ex-lax lattes, disabled gangster rappers, and a plethora of untalented retards in order to keep his seat on the reality TV throne?

To say that *Special Needs* is funny would be the understatement of the year. In fact, I had such a grand time with Isaak James' directorial debut that I watched the damned thing again as soon as my initial viewing came to a close. This sort of thing usually doesn't happen with low budget, low brow comedies, especially the ones distributed by the likes of Troma. I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with Troma, mind you, but the type of films they generally release are good for a disposable laugh or two, nothing more. *Special Needs*, on the other hand, just begs for multiple viewings, both sober and inebriated.

What saves the proceedings from becoming yet another deserted isle in the sea of tasteless cinema is Isaak James' intelligent script. He's smart enough to know that a movie based solely on one handicapped joke after another simply won't fly in this day and age. Not if he wants people to watch his movie, anyway. The material never treats its collection of "special individuals" cruelly, even when it appears that James is openly mocking them. Warren and his crew are just as screwy and dysfunctional as those they mean to exploit, which allows you to find the humor in their pursuit of handi-talent without feeling guilty about it. Another smart decision was to keep the show itself off-screen; I doubt it could have lived up to expectations, anyway.

It also helps matters considerably that James has assembled a talented cast of virtual unknowns to populate his edgy comedy with. Almost everyone involved does an outstanding job in the picture, though it's plain to see who the real star of the flick is. Isaak James gives himself quite a bit of screen time, though it would be unfair to say he kept most of the good lines for himself. The guy's got talent to spare, however, so it's nice that the film's strongest talent gets the majority of the laughs.

Having verbally spooed all over *Special Needs*, I'm sure you're wondering if there's anything wrong with the film, a little nugget of negativity that may ruin your own viewing experience. A quick look at my notes reveals nothing in particular. Comedies are exceptionally hard to review; what's funny to me may not be very humorous to you, your mother, or your diabetic grandfather. Most of the jokes in this flick work, though it would be a bold-faced lie to say that all of them pop off the screen and personally tickle your ass with a feather. That said, the majority of the prescribed laughs are functional, which is a very good indicator that you'll have a good time as well.

Will *Special Needs* fill that comedic void in your pathetic little existence? That all depends on how you define "comedy." If a little humor at the expense of others is something you aren't ashamed to laugh at, then the film will probably do the trick quite nicely. It's smart, engaging, and deliriously enjoyable on a level I honestly didn't expect. If nothing else, hardcore mockumentary fans will certainly have plenty to cheer about. Though I'm sure I'll invoke the wrath of the good and gracious and glorious Lloyd Kaufman by saying this, *Special Needs* is probably too good for the likes of Troma. Way too good. Though it pains me to say it, most of the stuff that they release is complete and utter trash. Isaak James' nifty feature-length debut, on the other hand, is anything but.

I'm sure even Lloyd would concede to that.



# ***SPECIAL NEEDS IS ACQUIRED BY LLOYD KAUFMAN AT TROMA ENTERTAINMENT***

## ***THE MISFITS HAVE FOUND A HOME AT TROMA!***

**New York, New York. – February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007** -- After several months of hard work and persistence, the producers of "*Special Needs*" (Isaak James, Michael Kricfalusi & Eva James) have signed a distribution deal with the legendary Lloyd Kaufman and Troma Entertainment.

In this low budget feature, a megalomaniac producer and his bully sidekicks embark on the production of a reality TV show exploiting people with disabilities. "It's amazing how ahead of ourselves we were with this film. In fact, a 'real' reality show entitled "*Love At Second Site*" involving physically deformed contestants is scheduled to air in the Netherlands in February of 2007!" says Isaak James (director of *Special Needs*) "Not unlike the freak shows of the old west, reality TV, through it's boundless ability to exploit, has unwittingly provided a platform for a group of generally balkanized individuals."

"We were thrilled when Troma (being a true champion of the independent film) took an interest in "*Special Needs*." We searched extensively for a company that could understand the film and market it correctly. We sent it into Troma and Lloyd got back to us within a few days saying he loved it. It was refreshing after the numerous wrist slappings we received from less daring distributors."



Though Troma is perhaps best known for the 80's classic "*The Toxic Avenger*" and many horror genre films, the company prides itself on distributing, 'films of the future.' Troma Entertainment has been a haven for original and uncompromising filmmakers, writers and actors for over 30 years. Alumni include: Matt Stone, Trey Parker, James Gunn, Billy Bob Thornton, Kevin Costner and Samuel Jackson.

Troma is currently in the process of creating and packaging the DVD for Domestic and International sales with an expected release date of Fall 2007.

# ***Special Needs* to make U.S. Premiere at Westwood International Film Festival in Los Angeles.**



**New York, NY – September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006** -- We are pleased to announce that **Special Needs** will be making its U.S. premiere at the Westwood International Film Festival in Los Angeles. **Special Needs** was one of 12 narrative features selected to appear at the festival. The film will be showcased alongside Andy Dick's **Danny Roane: 1st Time Director** and D.B. Sweeney's **Dirt Nap**. **Special Needs** will screen October 6th at midnight.

# ***SPECIAL NEEDS TO PREMIERE AT CALGARY FILM FESTIVAL, CANADA***



**New York, July 26, 2006** -- We are pleased to announce that "Special Needs" is an official selection of the Calgary Fringe Film Festival.

"Special Needs" is one of 10 feature films that will be showcased at the festival. It will be featured alongside "Unbeatable Harold" starring Dylan McDermott and Henry Winkler and "Tripping Forward." (both award winning features at several major festivals)

Special needs will be screened two times during the course of the festival: August 13th at 1PM in the category of "Bad People" and August 18th at 10PM in the category of "Politically Incorrect." For more information about the Calgary Fringe Film Festival please visit:

<http://www.calgaryfringe.ca/>

# SYNOPSIS

Reality TV hits a new low in Isaak James' outrageously offensive mockumentary Special Needs! Flamboyant producer Warren Piece and his bullying production crew are on a quest to produce "Handicaps", a startling new reality show about the physically and mentally disabled.

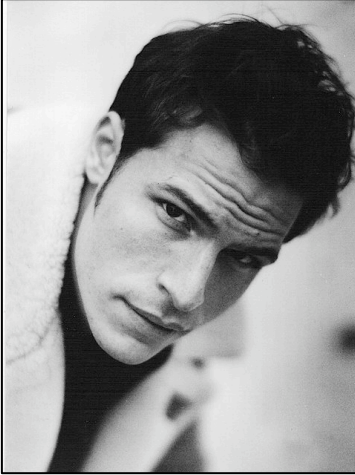
Crossing every line of political correctness, Warren and his cronies pull together the wildest cast of handicapables ever assembled, including a break dancing Schizophrenic, a wheelchair-bound pop singer, a foul-mouthed midget and a paraplegic gangsta!

But, as the show's budget skyrockets and the crew's own moral misgivings come into play, Warren soon finds his vision may be in need of some Special care.

An official selection of the Westwood International Film Festival and The Calgary International Fringe Film Festival, Special Needs is a painfully funny media satire that will keep you laughing in spite of yourself!



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE



I started writing "Special Needs" after appearing on a reality TV show. During the process I gained an insight into how things worked and thought that a film centered around reality TV would serve as the perfect vehicle to make a social comment.

"Special Needs" is as much about reality TV as Orwell's "Animal Farm" is about talking pigs. It's a social satire served up in a hard candy shell for all to enjoy (and hopefully digest.)

# BIOGRAPHIES



**ISSAAK JAMES (Writer, Director, Producer, Warren Piece)** Singer, writer, actor, songwriter and director. A product of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, he's worked on several short and feature films with award winning directors and talented artists alike. He has also appeared as a singer and actor on several nationally broadcast TV programs including NBC's "Gimme' The Mike" and Soapnet's "I Wanna Be A Soap Star." James has been a fixture of NYC's music scene for the last five years as best illustrated by his seasons-long running singing act at the prestigious Madison Hotel. The feature film "Special Needs" is James' directorial debut and will be released through Lloyd Kaufman and Troma Entertainment in summer of 2007.



**Eva James (Laura, Producer)** started learning about film and television production in middle school when she became involved with local access TV on Cape Cod. James is currently living in New York City working to earn her BA in English Literature at Marymount Manhattan College. She is also pursuing her ambition to be an actress, taking roles in several independent films.



**Michael C. Kricfalusi (David, Producer):** A graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Jared is currently in production for Sam Sheppard's "Savage Love", some other roles include Sam from "The Lady From Dubuque", Oliver in "As You Like it", John Willard in "The Crucible", the short film "The Stranger", and various roles in A. R. Gurney's "Scenes from an American Life."



**Jared Morgenstern (Richie):** Jared Morgenstern: Jared is a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (2005). Since then he worked in plays such as "Savage/Love" at the Big Little Theatre's Sam Sheppard Festival, "Hallelujah Illinois" at the Manhattan Repertory Theatre, "Much Ado About Nothing" at the Milagro Theatre, "Scenes From an American Life" directed by Mr. Johnathan Bolt, and others. His film and tv credits include the short film "Cupid Got Lazy", "Hair Trauma", and the feature length "Special Needs." He would like to thank his family and friends for there continued support, and Mr. Issak James for a fantastic experience.



**Randall Middleton (Josh):** Originally from Saint Louis, Randall has made New York his home the last few years. Recent stage credits include Oronte in the world premiere of Le Lycanthrope, Susan, in last years fringe smash The Banger's Flopera with Inverse Theatre Company, and Hank, in Kyle Jarrow's Space Karaoke with Red Metal Mailbox Theatre. Randall has also appeared as a regular player in the long running improv experiment Present Elevation. This fall Randall will be premiering an as yet untitled piece with Present Elevation and willl be playing the King of France in a new and improve production of Le Lycanthrope at the Kraine Theatre in NYC's East Village.



**Sabina Maschi (Natalie)** "Special Needs" marks Sabina's principal debut in a feature film. Her theatre credits include "Duke" in Sex On Trial, "Barbara" in "Lou Gherig Did Not Die Of Cancer", "Martha" in "The Children's Hour", "Lisa" in "The Girl on the Via Flaminia", "Miranda" in The Tempest", as well as "Guys and Dolls" and "Little Shop Of Horrors".



**Brian Whisenant (Ken)** Most recently, Brian has been seen as a very concerned juror on NBC's CONVICTION, a praying Jewish boy on LAW AND ORDER, and Hart Crane in the rarely produced STEPS MUST BE GENTLE by Tennessee Williams. Other projects include the yet to be released films: THE DATE FROM HELL and HEARSAY



**TIM NUTTALL (Director Of Photography)** Tim Nuttall graduated from New York University in 2004 with a concentration in cinematography. His experience involves both fictional and commercial work, including Emmy-winner Marian Marzynski's newest PBS documentary, television commercials and several narrative features, and dozens of short films. He also teaches film production at the New York Film Academy.

# CREDITS

Isaak James.....Writer/Director/Producer/Composer

Michael C. Kricfalusi.....Producer

Eva James.....Producer

# CREW

Isaak James.....Editor, Graphics

Tim Nuttall.....Director Of Photography

Rafael Cruz.....Sound

Rafael Cruz.....Still Photography

John Ryan Sosa.....Assistant Production Manager

Jared Staber.....Production Assistant

Jousha Akova.....Production Assistant

Eva James.....Assistant Editor

Jonathan Essa.....Consulting Editor

# CAST

(Alphabetical order)

Amir Levi.....Sam, contestant with Tourettes Syndrome  
Antonine Etienne.....Secretary  
Aran Bertetto.....Charles, paralyzed fashion designer  
Arthur J. Forte.....Open Call Auditioner  
Ashlee Gaughan.....Office Worker  
Barbara Ricci....Phyllis, Ex-talent manager  
Brian Whisenant.....Ken, ass kissing Production Assistant  
Cheyenne Quinn.....Acting Class Student  
Colleen Crawford....Cindy, Bob's girlfriend  
Daniel Gonzalez.....Photographer  
David Chullanandana.....Charles' Body Guard  
Deshon Porter.....Big D., Blind contestant  
Drew Pagliari.....Auditioner  
Dustin Patterson.....Open Call Auditioner in wheelchair  
Edna De Jesus.....Marysol, Warren's maid  
Eva James.....Laura Wilcox, psychotic casting director & ex movie star  
Funda Duval.....Rita Spellman, CNT Network Head  
Harvey Silikovitz.....Ron, small auditioner  
Irena Milos.....Bar Patron  
Isaac Santiago.....Blind open call auditioner  
Isaak James.....Warren Piece, megalomaniac Reality TV Producer  
Janelle Bernard.....Laura's Friend at Bar  
Jared Morgenstern.....Richie Goldman, Chief Network Executive, CNT  
Jared Staber.....Acting Student  
Jennifer Sandella.....Acting Class Student  
Jimmy Blackman.....Seizure man  
Joe Fulton.....Open Call Auditioner  
Joe Komara.....Corky, auditioner pretending to be retarded  
Joe Masi.....Bob, auditioner pretending to be a schizophrenic  
Joel Bruno.....Randy, alcoholic/schizophrenic  
John Ryan Sosa.....Developmentally Disabled Auditioner  
Jonette Raus.....Bar Patron  
Jousha Akova.....Acting Class Student  
Juansito Pina.....Jon, Deaf Contestant  
Kathleen Friel.....Annie, Contestant with Cerebral Palsey  
Keith Jones.....Killer P., rapper with Cerebral Palsey  
Larry Goldstein.....Singing Auditioner  
Lionel Simplicite.....Open Call Auditioner with some sort of Palsey  
Maury Fogel.....Open Call Auditioner  
Michael C. Kricfalusi.....David Smith, Warren's strong man  
Michael Cotayo.....Open Call Auditioner  
Miguel Suero.....Acting Class Student  
Nimo Gandhi....Disabled Indian Auditioner  
Noelle Reifel.....Bar Patron  
Randall Middleton.....Josh, Smart ass Production Assistant  
Ron Ward.....Waiter  
Sabina Maschi.....Natalie, would be actress Production Assistant  
Sean Allison.....Joe, errant dwarf  
Shannon DeVido.....Sunday, Singing contestant in wheelchair  
Stelth Bomber.....Joe, Killer P's Gun Toting friend  
Stephanie Masucci.....Laura's Friend at Bar  
Steve Arons.....Sandy, Randy's insane brother