

ROOM FOR RENT



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WRITER/DIRECTOR

Matt Atkinson

PRODUCERS

Justin Rebelo, Kyle Bornais

Running Time: 1 h 29 mins

LOGLINE

There's no place like someone else's home.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In senior year Mitch Baldwin won the lottery. Three years later he was flat broke and a laughing stock. He's been holed-up in his family home ever since. With his father retiring, talk of downsizing pushes Mitch to suggest renting their spare room to a mysterious stranger named Carl. When Carl upsets Mitch's routine way of life, a battle of wits turns into all-out war involving deception, humiliation, spying, and revenge. The question is how far are these guys prepared to go? The answer, too far.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Mitch Baldwin (30) is in a deep rut. He lives with his parents and has no intention of leaving. At 18, Mitch won the County Lottery, \$3.5M dollars. 12 years later he's broke, has no friends or love life, and is a laughing stock. With his dad retiring, talk of selling the house pushes tensions to a breaking point. Mitch convincingly suggests renting their spare room for extra cash. Tentative, his parents agree. Quickly, a charming, yet peculiar stranger shows up at their front door willing to pay cash – this is Carl Lemay (40). Mitch sets rules for Carl, but the family's routine is instantly upset. Mitch notices mysterious details about Carl; his car's license plates are missing, his back story is vague, and he seems set on pushing Mitch out of his comfort zone. Yet Mitch is disarmed by Carl's charm and confides in him about some of his regrets. To Mitch's dismay, Carl begins to use the information to undermine Mitch and expose his faults. A battle of wits breaks out and turns into all-out war involving deception, humiliation, spying and revenge. The question is how far are these two prepared to go?

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

When producer Justin Rebelo approached me about making a film, I told him I wanted to tell a funny story with dramatic genre undertones, like an ensemble comedy set in the world of Hitchcock where the laughs are found in the vague threats and passive aggressive interactions of the characters.

For that to work I knew I would need great comedic actors, actors who could play the nuances between the lines and make dramatic scenes funny. At the risk of feeling foolish, I made a wish list of actors whose performances have made me laugh, made me cringe, and made me empathize; almost as an exercise, really. Incredibly, due to the tireless work and faith of my producers, creative collaborators, and friends we were able to engage these actors based on personal relationships, and, one by one, my dream cast began to materialize. I'm still stunned about how fortunate I was to get to work with many of my comedy heroes, to have them truly invest in their characters, and help bring them to life.

If I had to choose one major lesson I learned while making this film, it's that persistence breeds luck. Two days before principal photography we lost our main location, the backdrop for ninety percent of our story, we had talent in hotels, the proverbial ship was leaving the harbour. My team and I hit the streets in search of a new location. We knocked on doors, drove up and down streets, made calls, peeked over fences; it was looking very grim. We were thirty hours out from cameras rolling, when a kind woman watching us all scramble around her neighbourhood offered that we take a look at her house. What we walked into was essentially what you see in the film, our set, fully formed, as if it had been dressed and waiting for us all this time. That's luck, persistence and luck, and I'm sure none of us will ever forget it.

Room For Rent is my debut feature as writer/director. I'm so proud of the film we were able to make. I was extremely fortunate to have such talented collaborators, from our team of producers and financiers, to our production team, post production team, and of course our cast. The resulting film is hopefully a compelling reflection of all the dedicated work from those involved, and hopefully a fun ride for audiences.

— Matt Atkinson

GENESIS OF THE STORY

The premise of Room For Rent was born when I discovered that my parents were planning to rent my boyhood bedroom. I no longer lived in it, thankfully, but the concept still felt odd to me. A stranger living in my family home? Would he help himself to food in the refrigerator? Would he get to choose what to watch on TV? More importantly, would he be a better son than me?

My parents never rented the room, instead it became the place where household junk went to die, but the concept stayed with me and I began outlining a script based on the situation.

The central character would become Mitch Baldwin, a poster-child for the Boomerang Generation (young adults who return to the nest after a failed attempt at life in the real world). I wanted Mitch's failure to be as haunting as possible so that his family home and routine were vital to his survival.

I had been fascinated with true stories of people winning vast sums of money in the lottery and somehow losing it all, usually as a result of hubris and ego. Mitch then became a high school senior who had won the local lottery, which caused him to ruin all the valuable relationships in his life and retreat to his boyhood bedroom to hideout.

The stranger was the most fun to create. Who is he? Why is he there? What does he want from Mitch? Inspired by great cinema villains from films like Cape Fear, Night of the Hunter, and Shadow of a Doubt, I created Carl Lemay, a Machiavellian monster with the personality of a used car salesman and an acute sense of what makes Mitch tick. Like any great villain, I wanted Carl to have more in common with Mitch than not, like a fun house reflection of the hero with the same desires and regrets only much more twisted and motivated.

Beyond the comedic premise, Room For Rent is the story of failure and redemption. It's about relationships and how we need each other but pretend we don't. It's a cat and mouse, stranger in the house, comedy pot-boiler that offers audiences laughs in the most awkward of moments.

ABOUT THE CAST



Brett Gelman's most recent film, "Lemon," which he stars in and co-wrote with director Janicza Bravo, premiered to rave reviews at this year's Sundance Film Festival. The film was also the opening night film for the 2017 International Film Festival - Rotterdam with the high praise continuing through its screenings at the SXSW Film Festival. Brett is currently shooting a recurring role on Netflix's award-winning series, "Stranger Things" and can also be seen as the brother-in-law on Amazon's smash hit, "Fleabag." Other recent projects include his return as 'Dr. Greg' on the new season of Judd Apatow's critically acclaimed series, "Love," and the release of his third comedy special for Adult Swim, "Brett Gelman's Dinner in America." He can also be seen in the upcoming return of David Lynch's hit show, "Twin Peaks."

Brett's television credits include the Adult Swim cop parody "Eagleheart" opposite Chris Elliot, the critically acclaimed FX comedy, "Married," opposite Nat Faxon and Judy Greer, Comedy Central's "Another Period," Starz's critically acclaimed series "Blunt Talk" opposite Patrick Stewart, and NBC's "Go On" opposite Matthew Perry. Film credits include roles in the Columbia-distributed comedies "The Other Guys" and "30 Minutes or Less," the Sundance selection, "Joshy," and the Docu/Fiction film, "Drib" that premiered at this year's South By Southwest Film Festival.



Mark Little is one of the founders of the sketch comedy group Picnicface. He stars in the CBC sitcom *Mr. D*, was named one of *Variety's* 10 Comics To Watch for 2013, and made his American television debut on *Conan* last year. In 2012, Mark co-wrote and starred in the feature film *Roller Town*, which won the Canadian Comedy Award for Best Film. Mark has won a combined 15 Canadian Comedy Awards as well as Canada's top two standup competitions, the Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh Off and the Just For Laughs Homegrown Competition. Mark's voice can be heard in two upcoming animated series: *Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs* (Sony) and *Cupcake & Dinosaur: General Services* (Netflix).



Born and raised in Brooklyn, Carla Gallo graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Theatre Arts. Carla's first major film role was in David O. Russell's feature SPANKING THE MONKEY. This breakout performance garnered Carla an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress, and the film won the Audience Award in Sundance. This caught the attention of the emerging comedic force, Judd Apatow who cast her as the female lead in the cult favorite UNDECLARED. Carla went on to work consistently with Apatow in such features as, THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN, KNOCKED UP, SUPER BAD, FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL, FUNNY PEOPLE and GET HIM TO THE GREEK.

Carla played dynamic roles in the iconic series, CARNIVALE, CALIFORNICATION and MAD MEN. Her recent television credits include BURNING LOVE, 2 BROKE GIRLS, WORKAHOLICS, and a major recurring role on BONES.

In both Universal's NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORS 2, Carla gives a scene stealing performance as Seth Rogen's and Rose Byrne's loveably, unglued friend.

Carla has recently completed work on two Netflix features, A FUTILE & STUPID GESTURE directed by David Wain, and LITTLE EVIL directed by Eli Craig.

Her other feature credits include, I LOVE YOU MAN, WE BOUGHT A ZOO and MOTHER AND CHILD.



Stephnie Weir is recently known for recurring roles on *CRAZY EX GIRLFRIEND*, and *LIFE IN PIECES* as well as her performance as “Kristen” on the FX series *THE COMEDIANS* opposite Billy Crystal and Josh Gad.

Born and raised in Odessa, Texas, Weir launched her career after moving to Chicago and performing on stage in the city with theater companies that include The Second City Main Stage, The Goodman Theatre and ImprovOlympic. Often recognized for her wide range of colorful characters on the hit series “MADTV,” Stephnie enjoyed her time performing and writing for the sketch comedy series. Opportunities that followed her run on “MADTV” include her work on the series “Big Day,” as well other favorites including “Modern Family,” “Weeds,” and the animated series “King of the Hill.”

As a writer, she has developed several half-hour scripts for television including “Y’all in the Family” for CBS and “Wright vs Wrong” & “Counter Culture” for ABC. She has also served as a Consulting Producer on the series “Raising Hope” and “The Millers.”

Weir and her husband, Robert Dassie, continue to perform “WeirDassie,” the two-person show they created. They have performed internationally, including Los Angeles, Portland, New York, Chicago and Edinburgh.

In 2002, Ms. Weir was named one of *VARIETY*’s “Top Ten Comedians to Watch.” She has performed at many comedy festivals, including the Las Vegas Comedy Arts

Festival, Montreal Comedy Festival, HBO Aspen Comedy Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

She will soon be seen on the series I LOVE DICK for Amazon and the feature film FIST FIGHT.

Ms. Weir lives in the Los Angeles area.



A “master artist” according to Variety and “tour-de-force” according to Backstage, Patrick J. Adams has starred as a fraudulent lawyer, a superhero, a veteran, a pro tennis player, and dozens of other memorable characters on stage and screen. For seven seasons Adams has charmed audiences worldwide, as Mike Ross in USA’s hit drama, “Suits,” a role which garnered him a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series.

Patrick will next be seen in Pulse Films’ comedic digital series “Pillow Talk,” executive produced by “Catastrophe”’s Sharon Horgan and distributed by Vice. Also this year, Patrick stars in the indie feature comedy “Room For Rent,” alongside comedic luminaries Brett Gelman, Mark Little, Stephanie Weir & Mark McKinney and the sci-fi feature, “Clara” from Serendipity Points Films with Troian Bellisario.

In 2016, Patrick starred opposite Troian Bellisario in the Old Globe Theatre's world premiere production of Anna Ziegler's "The Last Match," earning critical praise for his performance as Tim, an incredibly talented but deeply flawed pro tennis player. He also stepped off the Waverider as 'Hourman' in The CW/Berlanti/DC action series "Legends of Tomorrow."

With Zoe Saldana & Jason Isaacs, Adams starred in the 2014 television miniseries "Rosemary's Baby" directed by Agnieszka Holland. Additional television credits include Michael Mann and David Milch's acclaimed series "Luck" opposite Dustin Hoffman and Michael Gambon, season two of the hit series "Orphan Black" opposite Tatiana Maslany, "Lost," "Friday Night Lights," "Pretty Little Liars," "N.C.I.S.," "Lie To Me" and "Flash Forward."

Adams co-starred in films including the hit comedy "Old School," directed by Todd Phillips and 2009 Berlin Film Festival competitor "Rage" directed by internationally renowned filmmaker Sally Potter, in which he appeared alongside Judi Dench, Jude Law, Dianne Wiest and Steve Buscemi. His indie feature work includes "The Waterhole," 2009 Slamdance entry "Weather Girl," "6 Month Rule" directed by Blayne Weaver and "Car Dogs" opposite Academy Award winning actress Octavia Spencer.

Adams maintains strong ties to Southern California theatre. He produced and starred in writer Bill Cain's ("House of Cards") acclaimed production of "9 Circles" at the Bootleg Theatre in Los Angeles for which he was awarded a Backstage Garland Award for Best Performance in a Play and nominated for a 2012 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle award for Lead Performance. He is a member of the Ojai Playwrights Conference, starring in new works by established and developing playwrights. Cain's "Equivocation" was developed at Ojai and Adams subsequently starred in the celebrated Geffen Playhouse production, which was honored with the 2010 Best Production at the LA Ovation Awards. He made his professional stage debut in the landmark, West Coast premiere of Edward Albee's "The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?" at The Mark Taper Forum, which also took home Best Play at the Ovation Awards. Adams also produced and directed a hit revival of "Marat/Sade," for which he accepted Best Production at the L.A. Weekly Theatre Awards.

Originally from Toronto, Adams is a graduate of the University of Southern California.



Mark McKinney has performed in, written and produced some of the most sophisticated and groundbreaking television in North America. He has worked with the likes of Lorne Michaels on NBC's SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE (1985-86, 1995-97), and Aaron Sorkin on both SPORTSNIGHT (1998-99) and STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP (2006-07).

As co-creator, writer and ensemble cast member of THE KIDS IN THE HALL (1988-94), seen on CBC, HBO and CBS, Mark was nominated for three **Emmy Awards**. **Gemini Awards** for the series include *Best Writing* (1989, 1990) and *Best Performance* (1989, 1993). Mark followed this with three seasons on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE as both a principal cast member and staff writer. THE KIDS later returned to television in 2010 with the raucous miniseries, DEATH COMES TO TOWN.

With Susan Coyne and Bob Martin, he co-wrote the international hit SLINGS & ARROWS. The team won the 2006 and 2007 **Gemini Awards** for *Best Writing* as well as three **WGC Awards** (2004, 2006 and 2007). In 2006, Mark also took home a **Gemini in two acting categories**: *Best Performance in a Continuing Role* (SLINGS & ARROWS: as the skittish, scheming Richard Smith-Jones) and *Best Individual Performance in a Comedy Series* (for ROBSON ARMS). SLINGS & ARROWS was soon after syndicated in the US by the Sundance Channel.

Following STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP, again, as both a cast member and a

writer, Mark served as one of the producers, as well as the showrunner, of TMN/HBO Canada's biting LESS THAN KIND. He won the **WGC "Showrunner Of The Year"** and in 2012, Mark also won a **Canadian Comedy Award** for *Best Directing* on the series.

On the small screen, Mark has also appeared on: 3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN; WANDA AT LARGE; CORNER GAS; KEVIN HILL and SPUN OUT. His feature films include Guy Maddin's SADDEST MUSIC IN THE WORLD and Scott Smith's FALLING ANGELS, which garnered him and **ACTRA Award** nomination for *Outstanding Performance By A Male*. Other features include THE LADIES MAN; SUPERSTAR; THE OUT OF TOWNERS with Goldie Hawn and Steve Martin; SPICEWORLD; and DOG PARK.

As a writer and producer, Mark has shows in development with CBC and served as Executive Producer on PICNICFACE, a brilliant Halifax-based comedy troupe with with a 13-part series that aired on the Comedy Network. He continues to perform standup in L.A. and tours with the ever-popular, now iconic KIDS IN THE HALL.

Currently, Mark recurs in the FX series MAN SEEKING WOMAN with Jay Baruchel, and stars in the hit NBC sitcom SUPERSTORE with America Ferrarea and Ben Feldman.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MATT ATKINSON – Writer/Director

Matt is an award-winning filmmaker of long and short form content. His first feature length film as director, *Dakota*, won the Special Jury Prize at WIFF and is distributed by Mongrel Media and Film Option International. His work has aired on Netflix, CBC Bold, SuperChannel, and many entertainment hubs online. Matt is currently developing a number of film and television projects while continuing to create high quality content for the advertising industry where he has directed campaigns for major brands such as Samsung, Hyundai, Mazda, Bank of Montreal, Honda, among others. Matt is co-founder of El Duo Motion Pictures Inc. He lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife Amy-jo, and son Indiana... yes, as in Jones.

JUSTIN REBELO – Producer

Justin spent 15+ years in programming at various broadcasters including HBO Canada, Super Channel, EPIX and Much Music. He was the executive in charge of production on many feature films, feature documentaries and television series. Some highlights include Bruce McDonald's *Pontypool*, Lixin Fan's Award Winner *Last Train Home*, Ron Mann's *Altman*, TIFF Best First Canadian Feature *Blackbird*, TIFF's Best Canadian Feature *When Jews Were Funny*, and the multiple CSA nominee *Tiny Plastic Men*; and many more. *Room for Rent* is his first feature film as lead producer. He currently works at Entertainment One overseeing television and digital distribution for English Canada.

KYLE BORNAIS – Producer

Kyle Bornais is a two time CSA nominated producer that produces film and television for the Canadian and International marketplace. He co-founded Farpoint Films in 2000. Highlights of past projects include the award winning TV series' *Escape Or Die!*, *The Illegal Eater* and *The Medicine Line*; the feature films *Menorca*, *Room For Rent*, *Teen Lust*, *Mother's Day* and *Wild Cherry*; the Comedy Network original series *House Party*; and the feature documentaries *The Sheepdogs Have At It*, *We're The Weakerthans*, *Burning Ember* and *Randy Bachman: Every Song Tells a Story*.

HEAD CREDITS

a FARPOINT FILMS,
MUSTERIOS ENTERTAINMENT,
VIGILANTE PRODUCTIONS
and EL DUO MOTION PICTURES production

Costume Designer
WANDA FARIAN

Production Designer
GORDON WILDING

Music By
RICHARD PELL
IAN LEFEUVRE

Edited by
MICHAEL PIERRO

Director of Photography
ROBERT SCARBOROUGH

Co-Producers
ROBERT SCARBOROUGH
SCOTT GFELLER
SHAWN MYRICK

Executive Producers

TONY WOSK

SCOTT R. LEARY

MARK SATTERTHWAITE

JAY FIRESTONE

JOHN LAING

MARK GINGRAS

STEVEN PASTERNAK

Produced By

JUSTIN REBELO

KYLE BORNAIS

Written and Directed by

MATT ATKINSON

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