



By Carol Patton

# WILLOWS WAY: Directed by Kevin Dibacco

How does a movie become a cult film with a sequel already being written before it has a premiere or gets a release date? It begins with a an intriguing script, an alluring set, and a very enthusiastic, hard working cast and crew that came together to create WILLOWS WAY. WILLOWS WAY is a sci-fi independent film written and directed by a team of Maine brothers, Ralph (actually Raffaele) and Kevin Dibacco.

The cast and crew became best friends; they and their friends rooted for the project and now Ralph and Kevin have entered into a distribution agreement with York Entertainment and have a DVD release date of April 22, 2008. A Maine Premiere of the film Sunday, May 4th, at 3 PM at the Wyndham Hotel in South Portland, Maine will make up for the projects' missed wrap party. The whole cast and crew will be present.

Here's the synopsis for the film: A grieving father finds solace in an encounter with a stranded alien messenger and his magical staff. The messenger reveals that he became lost in space and time while on a mission to witness the arrival of a 'promised one,' a holy being destined to save mankind.

When the father intercepts the staff and travels back in time to try and prevent his son's death, the messenger begins to doubt his own mission and mankind's redemptive worth, and seeks to hold the planet accountable. In the end will the man choose to save his son, or instead prove the alien wrong and save mankind from certain demise?

Where did the idea for this film come from? Ralph DiBacco, the writer in the family, told us the story had been brewing a number of years, maybe incubating for a period of five years? In 2006, Ralph flushed out a rough draft...in the spring of 2007 he finished the script. And that's where Kevin DiBacco, the director in the family comes in. The two brothers have been making short films, commercial, and music videos since the mid-eighties, twenty plus years. This would be their first feature film. Totally self funded, the budget came in just under \$100,000.

Amid scouting locations and assembling a crew, the pair held a Casting Call in a Westbrook, Maine Mill Office, really off the beaten path. But, more than 80 people appeared and the pair of brothers was amazed at the talent they found to cast in their first feature film. All but one came from New England.

Here's the cast: Casey McDougal as Abigail Richards (Connecticut), C. James Roberts as Jacob Lazar (Maine), Karl Steudel as The Messenger/AI'ael (Massachusetts), Bill Humphreys as Pastor Everett Richards (Maine), Dan McCready as Liam "Sully" Sullivan (Massachusetts), Don Martone as Dominick "Bom" Graziano (Rhode Island), Michel Tiomico-Trahan as Albert "Bert" Crawford (Florida), Raquel Boehmer as Lois Kent Penny Korff as Sheriff Cassandra Bean (Massachusetts), Ann Harrison-Billiat as The Paramedic.

According to director Kevin DiBacco, "Our mission at DiBacco Films is simple, to do what we love and create entertaining film & video.... we strive to sell our movies to

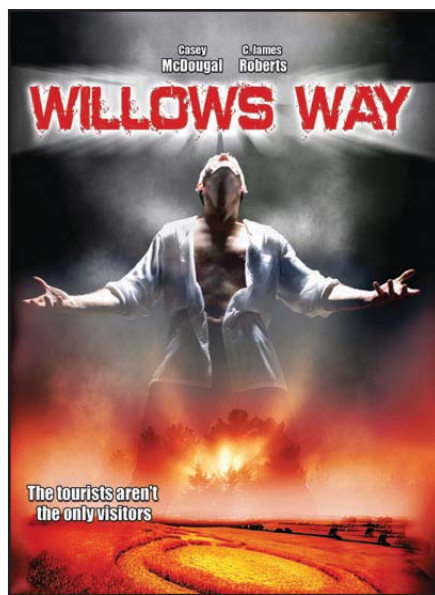
right: clockwise from top left, C. James Roberts as Jacob Lazar on a break on the set of WILLOWS WAY. Photo by Mark Hensley.

Kevin DiBacco and Mike Boucher (cinematographer) capture the garage scene. Photo by Mark Hensley.

Director Kevin DiBacco discusses the next scene with Script Super Karla Fossett and Director of Photography Mike Boucher on the set of WILLOWS WAY. Photo by Mark Hensley.

Actor Karl Steudel and writer/producer Ralph DiBacco digesting the next scene on the set of WILLOWS WAY. Photo by Mark Hensley.

The official new poster for DiBacco Film's WILLOWS WAY. Image courtesy of York Entertainment.



from top to bottom, The official new poster for DiBacco Film's WILLOWS WAY. Image courtesy of York Entertainment.

The WILLOWS WAY crew on the move. Photo by Mark Hensley.

Actor Bill Humphreys teaching on the ways of servitude on the set of WILLOWS WAY in Maine. Photo by Mark Hensley.



the masses. For the past 25 years we have stayed focused on our goal, without political influence, rich parents or corporate corruption. We will always fight for the underdog. We want people around us that have the same goal. Here's to the spirit of the Independent artist, and the freedom to create as you wish."

The people (crew) Kevin and Ralph surrounded themselves with are: Tim Francis as Producer/Production Supervisor (everyone is from Maine unless otherwise noted), Mike Boucher, Director of Photography; Rachel Arsenault, Graphic Designer; James Pross, Attorney/Agent; Angie Helton, Consultant/Associate Producer; Eddie "King" Green, Music Score (Massachusetts); Judy Beedle, 2nd AD; Karla Fossett, Script Supervisor; Chris Collucci, Continuity Director; Amanda Edgbert, Make Up; Judy Beedle, 2nd AD; Will Fraser- Location/Associate Producer; Bob Fiske, SFX/Props; Shaun Johnson, Location Audio Recording; Matt Fletcher, Audio; Mark Hensley, Production Photographer; Janis Vooris, Craft Services, Food/Crew Mom; and PA's Tiffany Carruthers, Dave 'Doc' Caswell (NH), Jillian Hilton, Jonathan "Many Hats" Blood, Sam Lazarus, Kim McClellan, and Neil Craig. All of whom reportedly shared the same goal.

Ralph, who is also a producer on the film as well as the writer, said, "The stars lined up...beyond any expectation; we had good weather, in twelve shooting days there was no rain, no clouds, no actor was ever late, no crew member was late or absent, absolutely nothing went wrong. It was surreal: no batteries died, the food was good, there was more than enough (food) and it was on time. It may have been supernatural. There was an aura around the sun, two weekends in a row. That's perfect continuity...really rare."

When post-production was complete, Kevin and Ralph sent out a DVD trailer and poster of the film to 150 distributors they selected from the Hollywood Creative Directory. They chose those that they thought best would represent their sci-fi genre film. They received two responses. Vanguard and York Entertainment responded and asked for screeners. A week later York Entertainment wanted to sign a contract. The brothers,

along with James Pross, their long time attorney in Augusta, hammered out a deal.

### So many things happened in the last 3 weeks.

It cost DiBacco Films \$1,500 to convert their film to digi-beta and they didn't get an advance. And they haven't even seen their final film yet, actually not knowing if it was at all edited or changed. York held the rights to edit and change title, art etc. The title has not changed: the poster did. Already York has featured the film at NATPE in Las Vegas the last week in January (see the NATPE Report in this issue), and York now, as we go to press, are off to the European Film Market (EFM) in Berlin with a slate of sixteen films, WILLOWS WAY among them. Kevin and Ralph have confidence in Marty Poole, York's Acquisitions Director.

Headquartered in Los Angeles, York's films are distributed in the traditional DVD format, as well as through new media digital formats and streaming. York's DVD product is available nationally through wholesalers like Ingram Entertainment, VPD, and Waxworks & Baker & Taylor. From coast to coast, York titles fill the shelves in many major retail outlets and can be readily accessed via a multitude of internet-based streaming and distribution sources.

Kevin and Ralph DiBacco await results from their being featured at NATPE and EFM. But mostly they are looking forward to their film's release and their local premiere. We'll be checking in with them for the information every independent filmmaker wants to know: what return on their investment (both money and creative effort) will they make back? And how many people will see their work?

For more information visit: [www.willows-waythemovie.com](http://www.willows-waythemovie.com).

Carol Patton is the founder and publisher of IMAGINE. She is an advocate for the industry in New England serving to encourage our region to become the number three production Mecca in America.