

From Off-Broadway to Occam's Beard: David Ezell and Will Lerberg Reunite to Film International Award-Winning Script

*A year after sharing an Off-Broadway stage, David Ezell and Will Lerberg reunite to film award-winning *Occam's Beard*—and cast its Norwegian lead.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One year after sharing the stage in an Off-Broadway Elizabethan drama, David [Ezell](#) and Norwegian-born actor Will [Lerberg](#) have reunited for *Occam's Beard*, a new psychological short film set for production in New York and Connecticut.

The reunion brings an internationally recognized screenplay together with an unusually serendipitous piece of casting. Before cameras began rolling, *Occam's Beard* had already received numerous honors, including recognition from the Cannes Film Awards and Best Short Script at the Big Apple Film Festival.

Ezell wrote the screenplay approximately a year before production without Lerberg—or any particular actor—in mind. In doing so, however, he created a remarkably specific casting problem.

The film's central character, JP Ellison, is around 30, Norwegian, descended from Vikings, and required to carry much of an emotionally and psychologically demanding story.

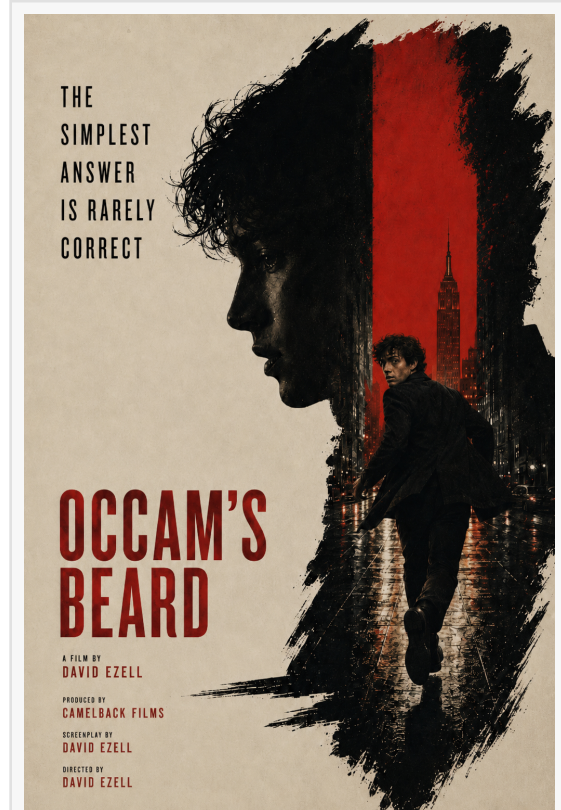
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When I read the screenplay,
I was moved to tears.”

Will Lerberg

“I thought I'd made JP almost uncastable,” Ezell said.
“Around 30, Norwegian, with Viking ancestry—and a demanding role. Then I realized I knew someone who

checked every box.”



Occam's Beard Pre-Release Poster

That someone was Lerberg.

Months earlier, Ezell and Lerberg had worked together as actors on an Off-Broadway stage. Only later did Ezell make the connection between his former castmate and the character he had created. He contacted Lerberg and sent him the screenplay.

Lerberg read it—and was moved to tears.

For Ezell, the reaction confirmed that the connection went considerably deeper than Lerberg simply matching JP's biography.

Born in Norway and now building his professional career in New York, Lerberg is an alumnus of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, the historic Manhattan conservatory founded in 1884. He has performed professionally on New York stages and now takes on a leading screen role that draws simultaneously on his theatrical training, his Norwegian background and his ability to navigate psychologically demanding material.

That combination gives Lerberg a distinctive profile among emerging New York performers: European-born, classically trained in one of America's oldest acting institutions, professionally tested on the New York stage and increasingly positioned for work across stage and screen. **Occam's Beard** offers an opportunity to introduce a wider audience to an actor whose background is international even as his professional foundation has been built in New York.

In the film, Lerberg plays JP Ellison, a former child star who confronts psychiatrist Dr. William "Liam" Fallows with a disturbing conviction: the man sitting across from him is not actually the doctor he has known for most of his life.

What begins as an encounter between patient and psychiatrist develops into a psychological struggle over identity, memory, perception and proof.



Actor Will Lerberg



David Ezell and Will Lerberg in the NYC debut of 'Interlude Of Youth'

JP is certain of what he sees. Liam is equally certain that JP is wrong. As memories and competing versions of the past intrude upon the present, the film asks a deceptively simple question: how can anyone prove who they are to someone whose mind has made proof impossible?

The story moves through different periods of JP's life, with multiple actors portraying him at different ages as the audience gradually sees the history behind the confrontation.

For Ezell, **Occam's Beard** marks his first screenplay, though not his first work as a dramatist. His first play, **The Great American Scream Machine**, received recognition in the 2024 SOOP Annual Play Competition and was selected for production. Ezell is also an actor, film historian and psychotherapist, professional experiences that converged in unexpected ways when he began writing **Occam's Beard**.

The origins of the screenplay reach back to experiences much earlier in his career.

Part of the story grew from Ezell's recollection of a patient he treated as a young psychotherapist, an experience that remained with him long after their professional relationship had ended. Another influence was a friend who was an actor and who, during a period of serious psychological instability, caused Ezell to think more deeply about what the profession of acting asks of the human mind.

"Acting requires you to surrender yourself, at least temporarily, to another identity," Ezell said. "Watching someone I cared about struggle made me realize that may not be healthy—or even possible—for everyone."

Those two memories eventually converged in JP Ellison: an actor whose profession depends upon assuming identities created by other people while his own certainty about identity and reality becomes increasingly unstable.

That psychological foundation also made the casting of JP especially important. Lerberg was not being asked simply to resemble a character on the page. The role moves between vulnerability, certainty, anger, fear and fierce conviction, often requiring the audience to understand JP emotionally even when it cannot know whether his perception of events can be trusted.

Lerberg's Norwegian heritage brings an additional layer of authenticity that could not be manufactured through dialect, wardrobe or backstory. JP was written as Norwegian long before Ezell considered Lerberg for the part; the correspondence between actor and character came afterward.

For Ezell, that is what makes the collaboration feel less like conventional casting and more like an accident of timing.

The actor who seemed almost impossibly specific on the page had, for nearly a year, been someone he already knew.

For Lerberg, *Occam's Beard* represents a significant screen showcase after establishing himself professionally on New York stages. For Ezell, it brings his first screenplay from an internationally recognized script into production. And for both actors, it transforms a relationship that began on an Off-Broadway stage into a new collaboration in film.

Occam's Beard is produced by Camelback Films and is currently set for production in New York and Connecticut.

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