

Everyone has a breaking point...



anyone's SON

A TRUE STORY

# Anyone's Son

HARRY DE LA ROCHE SR. was a God fearing, patriotic, dedicated family man. He was also admired as a boy scout leader, a little league coach, and was respected by his peers in the middle class community of Montvale, New Jersey. Everything appeared to be seemingly normal for the De La Roche family. Or at least that's what everyone thought. What people didn't know was the dark secret inside the De La Roche home, which was brought on by Harry Sr.'s split personality. He was an abusive stern taskmaster and a strict disciplinarian.

Harry Sr.'s dark alter ego was especially obsessed by his name sake, Harry Jr., who could never live up to his father's expectations. Harry Jr. was pushed, abused and taunted his whole life by Harry Sr. who demanded excellence and perfection, both in academics and athletics. Harry Sr., lived vicariously through Harry Jr. and forced him to participate in sports and activities as well as encouraging him to become a gun enthusiast. But it was evident that Harry Jr. was not up to the task. Nothing in his life ever seemed to fit, and though he tried his very best, he always fell short in the eyes of his father. This meant severe punishment from Harry Sr. that was administered brutally, both mentally and physically. Outside the De La Roche home, Harry Sr. was the perfect father. Inside, he was a monster.

On Thanksgiving weekend 1976, Harry De La Roche Jr., now 18 years old, was returning home from The Citadel Military Academy for the long holiday. On his way home, Harry Jr. contemplated how he would break the news to his father. Harry's plan of quitting the Academy was not an option his Dad would ever consider. Harry Sr. was finally proud of his son and still managed to have a controlling influence on Harry and the choices he made.

When Harry arrived, the town was busy preparing for quiet family dinners and the big High School rivalry football game. But for Harry, bigger issues clouded his consciousness as he retreated into solitude, a somewhat comfortable zone for Harry.

Harry was afflicted from the intense disciplinary parenting instilled by his father and was constantly in search of his father's acceptance and approval. But as fate would have it, Harry was finally going to get the attention he craved.

As the weekend drew to a close, a communication breakdown between Harry and Harry Sr. would ultimately drive Harry to his breaking point, as he crossed that fragile line, reaching a point of no return. The unsuspecting evil that lay dormant was about to unleash a demon into the soul of Harry Sr.'s son.

Based on a true story and a best selling book, *Anyone's Son* portrays the horrific events of a haunting holiday weekend, in 1976. Harry De La Roche Jr. was arrested and charged with murdering his father, mother and two younger brothers while they slept. Soon after Harry's arrest a totally different story would emerge. Harry claims to have confessed under duress. He maintained then and does to this day that he did not commit these murders. He claims that his brother Ronnie killed the other family members. Upon discovering this he then turned the gun on his brother in a fit of rage.

So what really did happen to the De La Roche Family? There are many unanswered questions in this tragic story. This gruesome and shocking nightmare, something that no one could ever imagine, shattered the entire community of Montvale New Jersey. The De La Roche Murders represent the collapse of the modern day American family. Harry could indeed be *Anyone's Son*.



**Harry  
1976**



**Harry  
2005**



# anyone's SON

A TRUE STORY



De La Roche Family Funeral



De La Roche Home



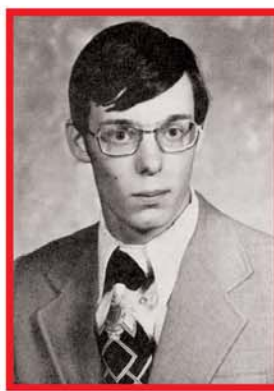
Harry's Arrest



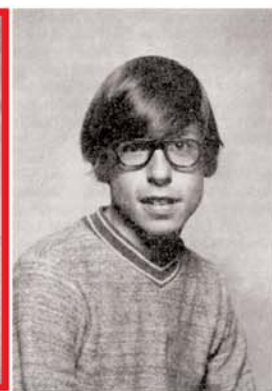
Harry Sr.



Mary Jane



Harry Jr.



Ronnie



Eric

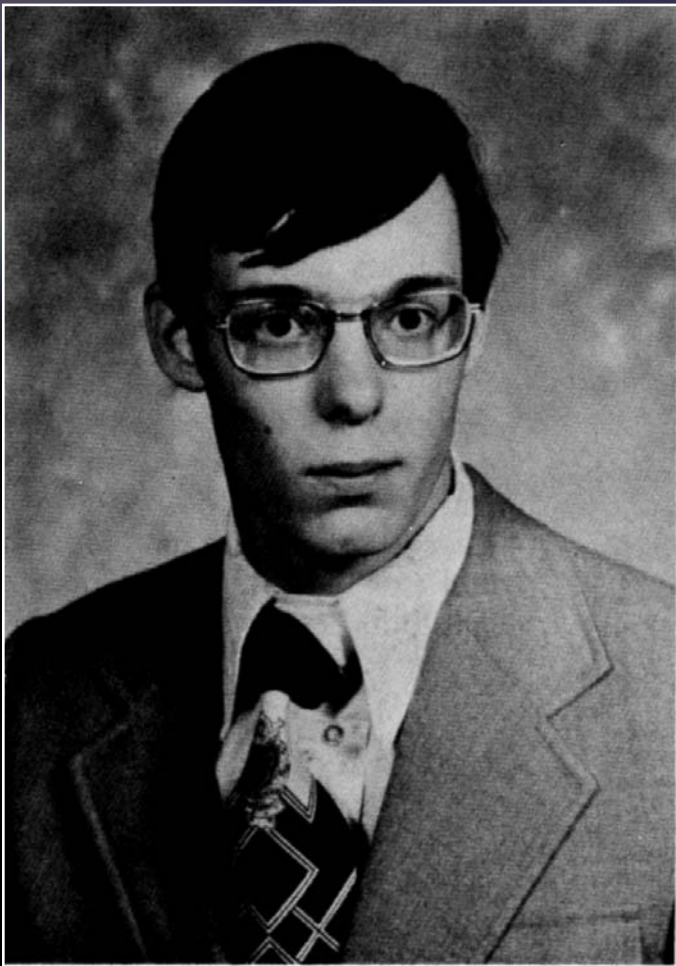


Harry De La Roche with Actor/Writer/Producer Jon Doscher at South Woods State Prison

# Anyone's Son

## HARRY DE LA ROCHE JR.

Harry De la Roche, Jr. has been incarcerated since he was 18 years old. Now, more than thirty years later, he faces his third and final appeal for parole. Harry Jr. is now serving four consecutive life sentences for the horrific, grisly murders of his father, mother, and two younger brothers as a result of that unforgettable Thanksgiving weekend in 1976. This compelling true story is told through the eyes of Harry De La Roche, Jr as he is seen stepping back into his past in present time, to finally reveal the brutal reality of the dysfunctional De La Roche family. In a desperate attempt to clear his conscience, Harry finally can come to terms with the truth, by forgiving himself and freeing his soul.



**Harry  
1976**



**Harry  
2005**



# Anyone's Son

## HARRY DE LA ROCHE SR.

A God fearing, patriotic, dedicated family man. Harry Sr. is a loyal husband to Mary Jane and a seemingly good father to his three sons, Harry Jr., Ronnie, and Eric. He is also admired by his peers as a Boy Scout leader, little league coach, and for his work within the Church. He is an avid gun enthusiast who believes that guns represent power and control. He encourages his sons to actively pursue his passion for firearms and marksmanship. Harry Sr. appears to be the perfect Dad; however, he has a strong split personality, and lives vicariously through his sons as a stern taskmaster and strict disciplinarian. Harry Sr's dark alter ego is especially obsessed by his eldest son, Harry Jr., who will never live up to his father's expectations which leads to the collapse of the De La Roche family.



**Harry  
1976**



**Harry  
2005**

# Anyone's Son

## MARY JANE DE LA ROCHE

A devoted wife and a loving mother, Mary Jane is honored for her hard work with the Welfare Board, Chamber of Commerce and the local Republican Club. In addition, she works part time at the local library, assists in distributing the district newspaper, and delivers food baskets to the needy. At home, she is subservient, reserved and quiet. A classic enabler, she ignores Harry's mental and physical abuse towards her three sons in fear of standing up to him, deferring to all of his wishes and commands. Mary Jane's concerns for Harry Jr. were evident with her knowledge of the pressure and ridicule he received at school combined with the strict guidelines Harry Sr. set for him. However, she never imagined that this would all lead to the ultimate collapse of the De La Roche family.



**Harry  
1976**

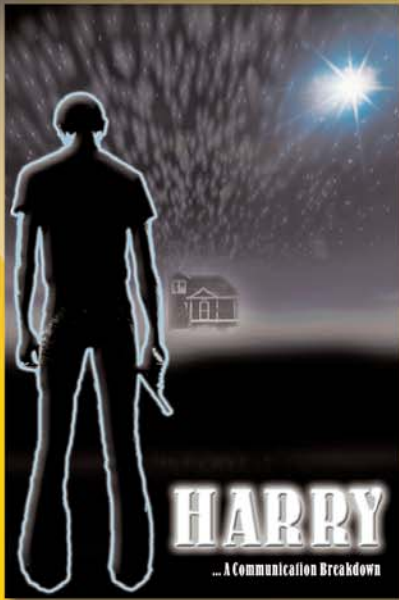


**Harry  
2005**



# STARLINE FILMS

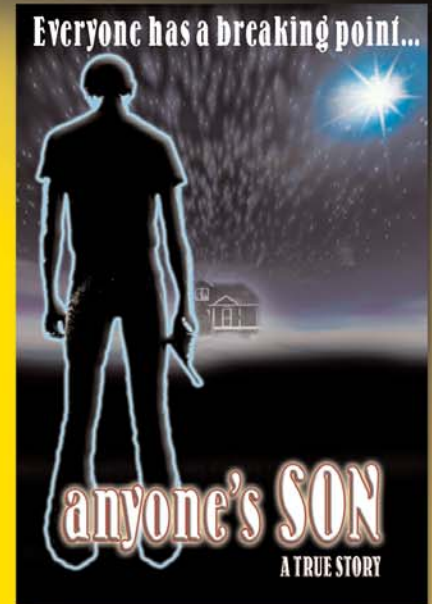
PRESENTS



DOCUMENTARY FILM



ANYONE'S SON BOOK



FEATURE FILM

## IMPORTANT DATES & INFO:

- **Anyone's Son** has been marketed as a feature along with the documentary *Harry, A Communication Breakdown*, over the past two years, through our websites, events and press releases.
- **Documentary Film** was premiered on November 26th, 2008..
- **Documentary Film** is narrated by Academy Award Nominated Actor Danny Aiello.
- **Book Forward** to be written by Academy Award Nominated Actor Danny Aiello.
- **Harry De La Roche** was denied Parole for the last time in November 2007 (Immense marketing & publicity). Refer to article titled "*Man Who Killed his Family in 1976 is Denied Parole*"
- **Book Signings** will be scheduled to promote the re-release of the book w/ Author Roberta Roesch, Danny Aiello and Jon Doscher at Bookends book store in Ridgewood, NJ. (*Anyone's Son* has already sold over 100,000 copies since 1979)
- **Book/Documentary DVD combo** on sale for Fall 2009 Selling Season. (*May to December 2009*)
- **Re-release the book** with the theatrical release of the feature film.

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new york 10017  
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*"A moving story of a boy pressured beyond endurance by family restraints and expectations. . . should provoke further analysis of the case."*

Publishers Weekly



## Journalist Uncovers The Why Of Famous Family Mass-Murder Case

A domineering father, an oppressive military school and an acute sense of failure were the fatal combination for Harry De La Roche, Jr., the New Jersey youth convicted of the mass killing of his family over Thanksgiving holiday, 1976. ANYONE'S SON: A True Story (Andrews & McMeel), by Roberta Roesch with Harry De La Roche, Jr., shows how the seeds of that murder were sown by this "typical" American family and by the society which surrounded it. Using confidential files, correspondence, and exclusive interviews with Harry De La Roche, Jr., it "reveals the emotional turmoil under the facade of what seemed like an average American family." according to *Publishers Weekly*. Flora Rheta Schreiber, author of SYBIL, writes:

"This is a true and chilling story of a recent crime by an 18-year old boy from a 'good family'. When 'goodness' in this instance turns out to be no more than a mask for family psychosis, the reader feels the pity and terror of the intense identification of thinking, 'It could happen to my family.'"



What appeared to be a normal suburban household on first glance, the De La Roches become a family full of tension under Ms. Roesch's scrutinizing reportage. Harry, who spent his early years subjugated by his father (he was beaten and often forced to sit in a chair for two hours without moving, for example), was a school scapegoat from first grade through his years at the famous military academy, the Citadel. One of his peers wrote after the tragedy, "How many of us perceived his loneliness yet continued to add to it? How many of us contributed to the mockeries? How many of us can honestly say that we never harmed him? Can you think of any Harrys you know?"

Statistics show that a high percentage of all murders occur among relatives. Some experts say figures are on the rise. Rarely do we discover the motivations behind these crimes as clearly as in *ANYONE'S SON*, which shows how family pressures can erupt into violence.

Roberta Roesch is a magazine writer, newspaper columnist and author of five books. As a free-lance writer she has contributed to many major magazines, including *Readers Digest*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Us and Parents*. Her column on careers runs weekly in the Bergen Record. She is the author of *JOBS FOR WEEKENDS* and *THERE'S ALWAYS A RIGHT JOB FOR EVERY WOMAN*.

Ms. Roesch, who teaches writing, lives in Westwood, New Jersey, a stone's throw from Montvale, the site of the De La Roche Murders.

*ANYONE'S SON: A True Story*

By Roberta Roesch

Andrews & McMeel

Publication Date: June 7, 1979

Price: \$9.95

Pages: 305

Contact: Nancy Larick . . . . . TV/Radio

Gwen Jones. . . . . Press



Mr. De La Roche;

February 15, 2005

My name is Jon Doscher. I have been able to identify personally with your story starting at the time I began high school at Pascack Hills. I remember always wanting to know more of the story, wanting to know the real facts of the case and not just what people wanted to believe. Throughout high school I saw the pressures and cruelty that classmates bring upon each other, and ultimately what was brought upon you when you attended Pascack Hills.

I believe that this along with what I have found out about your family life from Roberta Roesch's book, Anyone's Son, clearly outlines the reasons for your confusion and depression at that time.

Ironically enough, after high school I moved to 48 E. Grand Ave. in Montvale, just seven houses up the street from your old residence. This only furthered my interest in you and the death of your family members.

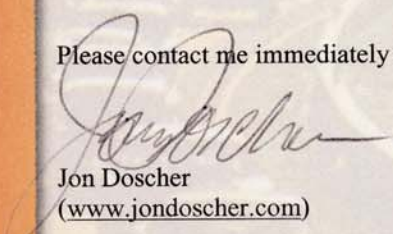
Within the last two years I have become more passionate about finding out the intricate details of the entire case. I believe that the trial you were put through was a disaster, combining elements such as misrepresentation and misjudgment towards you. Someone in your position at that time, having just lost your entire family should have been dealt with as someone in need of rehabilitation, not a life sentencing.

I now live in Ridgewood, NJ and have become a filmmaker. I own a production company called Starline Films ([www.starlinefilms.com](http://www.starlinefilms.com)), located in Upper Saddle River, NJ. My company is currently promoting my crime thriller entitled 'Remedy' and we are currently in development of two feature films, one of which is based on Anyone's Son.

From growing up in the same town and attending the same high school, I am in contact with many people that were directly involved or affected by this tragic event. Many of them support the ideas that I have about telling your story because I wish to convey the accurate facts that surrounded the case. One of the goals I have set for myself in the production of the film is to somehow educate and influence a mainstream audience on civil and human values. I also wish to touch the minds of the people on the parole board, to show them that you do not belong in a prison. The highest goal I am reaching for is to help, even one person, that may become a victim of circumstance, like you, and be able to change what may or may not be in their future.

The purpose of telling you all of this is because I wish to meet you. I would like to discuss my ideas and proposals and get your thoughts on them. Simply put, this story needs to be told and your involvement will make it more powerful.

Please contact me immediately to schedule a meeting.

  
Jon Doscher  
([www.jondoscher.com](http://www.jondoscher.com))



Mr. Jon Doscher  
348 Route 17 North  
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

March 15, 2005

Dear Mr. Doscher,

I received your letter the end of last month. Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you.

To tell you the truth, I am of two minds about a movie being made. Of course a factual telling of the story would be helpful to me. on the other hand, the State is very negative about inmates and publicity, good or bad.

Another thought is I don't know how appealing this story will be to an audience. It's almost a thirty year old story, it doesn't involve famous people or other subjects audiences find fascinating nowadays.

As for the Parole Board, they are ones of the groups of people who do not like inmates and publicity combined. They are not happy with me anyway, as I am back in the Appellate Court about their actions. Their last move was to give me my last (third) denial of parole in the form of a 5 year "hit".

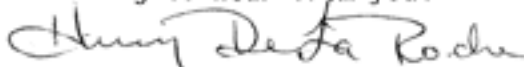
As far as scheduling a meeting goes. It would probably be more effective if your office made contact with South Woods. What you want would have to be a Special Visit. Regular visits, including adding people to visiting lists, has to follow a very narrow procedure. Even though they do not like inmates and publicity, they are sensitive to it, for fear of being painted in a bad light. So, your requesting this would be best.

The Administrator's (warden) name is Kathryn MacFarland, and the phone number is (856) 459-7000.

You could also start at the top, which is the Commissioner, Mr. Devon Brown at (609) 292-9860. His Chief of Staff is Charles Ellis at (609) 633-2744.

Or we could do this via letters. Phone calls and allowable numbers can only be added to or changed twice a year, and the time for submission is not near.

Waiting to hear from you.



Harry De La Roche  
#83628/ SBI#696074A  
South Woods State Prison H-11R  
215 Burlington Road South  
Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302

Mailed out 3/15/05



Search Form >> List >> Details

**Offender Details**

SBI Number: 000696074A  
 Sentenced as: Dela Roche, Harry  
 Race: White  
 Ethnicity: White  
 Sex: Male  
 Hair Color: Brown  
 Eye Color: Brown  
 Height: 6'3"  
 Weight: 183 lbs.  
 Birth Date: September 23, 1958  
 Admission Date: January 26, 1978  
 Current Facility: SWSP  
 Current Max Release Date: N/A  
 Current Parole Eligibility Date: N/A



**Current Prison Sentence**

Offense	Offense Date	Sentence Date	County of Commitment	Commitment Order	Mandatory Minimum Term	Maximum Term
4 counts of: 2A:113-1 Murder	January 26, 1978	January 26, 1978	Bergen	S-1573-76	None	LIFE

**Incarceration History**

Date In Custody	Date Out of Custody
January 26, 1978	Currently In Custody

**Aliases**

No aliases available

[previous](#)
[back to list](#)
[next](#)  
[modify search](#)
[new search](#)

**Criteria Chosen:**

Last Name = DELA ROCHE; SBI Number = 000696074A;

**Disclaimer:**

The purpose of the Offender Search Web Page is to promote public safety and welfare while providing community access to selected offender information, consistent with the spirit and intent of the New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA).

The New Jersey Department of Corrections updates this information on a biweekly basis to ensure that it is complete and accurate as possible. This information, however, may change quickly. In addition, it is noted that offenders on Work Release, Furlough, or in a Halfway House are visible to the public and these types of releases are not necessarily reflected in their profile. Therefore, the information on this site may not reflect the true current location, status, release date or other information regarding an offender.

It should also be noted that the records of offenders who have been paroled or released are not updated after they leave the custody of the correctional facility, therefore, no presumption should be made that any offender listed as paroled from a correctional facility remains under active parole supervision.

Furthermore certain offenders, at the discretion of the New Jersey Department of Corrections and other law enforcement agencies, may be excluded from the web site.



## Slaying Suspect Called 'Outcast' Who Sought Friends

By DAVID F. WHITE

New York Times (1857-Current file); Nov 29, 1976; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 200 pg. 59



The New York Times

Montvale police car outside the De La Roche home where four members of the family were found murdered yesterday.

Nov.  
29,  
1976

## Slaying Suspect Called 'Outcast' Who Sought Friends

By DAVID F. WHITE

He was tall, thin and wore glasses, he was called a good student by one of his high-school teachers—although he needed "pushing"—he planned to study political science at The Citadel, a South Carolina military college, but most of all, people who knew Harry De La Roche Jr. said about him, he had always wanted friends.

"Harry really was not accepted by the other students," Linda Keating, 16, an acquaintance, said about the 18-year-old, who is charged with having shot his parents and two brothers to death as they slept last night.

"He was like an outcast. People would mock him," said Miss Keating, who lives in Montvale and works at Huff's Ice Cream Bar there.

"As he went down the hall, people would just call out, 'Hi, Harry,' to tease him," she said.

Sometimes it was worse than that. Once his car was vandalized, Theresa Gagliano, another acquaintance, said.

He had a reputation for trying to buy friends; not directly, but if somebody was buying lunch, he would buy it, acquaintances said last night. If somebody needed gasoline, Harry would offer to buy it.

"He was very shy. He wanted sympathy," said Miss Gagliano, who is 16, lives in Park Ridge and also works in the ice cream parlor.

"He knew he wasn't accepted and he was too hard on himself. He would knock himself," Miss Gagliano said.

He was graduated this year from Pascack Hills High School and became one

of 1,550 cadets at The Citadel, a 134-year-old state-supported college, where he was one of about 100 cadets in N Company and "an average, quiet neutral cadet," according to his tactical officer.

Little else was known about young De La Roche at the college. Mr. De La Roche's roommate, whose name was not given out, declined to talk to reporters, a spokesman for the school said.

Miss Keating's father, William Keating, had taught Mr. De La Roche sociology at Pascack Hills, and was baffled by the news of last night's murders.

"He was very nice, very pleasant, he was good all the way around," Mr. Keating said, adding:

"He needed a little pushing, though. He was not the type who would lead the class."

According to the Bergen County Prosecutor, Joseph C. Woodcock, Mr. De La Roche had made marksmanship a hobby, and had had target practice locally. Several guns were kept in the De La Roche home, Mr. Woodcock added, including the murder weapon, a .22-caliber pistol.

A next-door neighbor, Harold G. Buscher, who chatted with the De La Roches often when they worked in their backyard or had parties outside their red clapboard and flagstone home, said that he, too, was confused by the murders.

"He was very active in the Little League and civil affairs," said Mr. Buscher about the youth's father, Harry William Frederick De La Roche, a Ford Motor Company sales representative,

## New Report About Family Murder Causes Delay in Teen-Ager's Trial

By ROBERT HANLEY  
Special to The New York Times

HACKENSACK, Oct. 24—The murder trial of Harry De La Roche Jr., the 19-year-old former military student accused of slaying his parents and two brothers last November, was postponed indefinitely today amid a flurry of subpoenas over a weekend newspaper article in which the teen-ager was quoted as saying his younger brother, not he, had committed three of the murders.

The Bergen County Prosecutor's office served a subpoena at the Hackensack office of The Record, demanding that the paper surrender the tape recordings of a four-hour jailhouse interview in which Mr. De La Roche purportedly said he had killed his 16-year-old brother Ronald in a fit of rage after finding his father, Harry Sr., 44; his mother, Mary Jane, 50, and youngest brother, Eric, 12, murdered in the family's home in Montvale.

The newspaper refused today to comply with the subpoena, contending that the tape recording was privileged material and thus was legally protected from forced disclosure by a three-week-old amendment to the state's so-called "shield law." The 12-year-old law prohibits courts, the Legislature and other official bodies from forcing newsmen to reveal anonymous sources.

The amendment on which The Record is relying was signed into law Oct. 5 by Governor Byrne. It broadened the law's protective provisions to include any news or information a newsman gathers, irrespective of whether the source is identified and regardless of whether all that news is disseminated to the general public.

### Argument Is Cited

Before that amendment became law, a newspaper had no statutory protection, once subpoenaed, to withhold news gathered from a source who had been publicly identified by the newsman.

Peter G. Banta, attorney for The Record cited that argument when he appeared in the Bergen County Court chambers of Judge James F. Madden at 10 A.M., the hour the Prosecutor's subpoena was returnable.

"I just announced that we were no

going to respond," Mr. Banta said after the private hearing in chambers.

Judge Madden immediately imposed an order on both Assistant County Prosecutor Richard E. Salkin, who is trying the case, and Mr. De La Roche's defense attorney, John R. Taylor, ordering them not to discuss the case with the press. Judge Madden also ordered an indefinite delay in jury selection, which had been scheduled for this morning.

The judge later said in a brief statement that he had ordered the delay "so both the defense and the state could file certain motions."

### No Further Steps Taken

After The Record's original refusal to comply with the subpoena, no further steps were taken by either side.

County Prosecutor Roger W. Breslin Jr. suggested that he and Mr. Salkin expected that Mr. Banta would now file a motion to quash the subpoena.

Mr. Banta said he had no immediate plans to do so, and expected Mr. Breslin's office to first file a motion with Judge Madden to force The Record to comply with the subpoena.

Although Mr. Taylor refused to discuss the case because of what his office called Judge Madden's "gag order," he is known to have asked that he, too, be given the tape-recordings of the interview between his client and John Banaszewski, The Record reporter who interviewed Mr. De La Roche last Thursday in the Bergen County Jail annex, where he is being detained without bail. Mr. Banaszewski wrote a story in the Sunday paper quoting the suspect as saying he killed his brother Ronald after Ronald killed the three other members of the family.

Mr. Taylor denied in Mr. Banaszewski's article that he had agreed to permit the interview so it would generate enough pre-trial publicity to win Mr. de La Roche a mistrial.

Mr. Taylor was said to have argued before Judge Madden this morning that the reporter violated an agreement that his interview with Mr. de La Roche would be limited to reports of several inmate reprisals against the thin, introverted suspect recently for spurning the advances of a homosexual inmate.





# De La Roche Found Guilty and Given Life Sentence

Continued From Page 4

since the trial started on Jan. 5. One juror, Daniel McCarthy, said that the jury was not convinced of Mr. De La Roche's insanity. "There was no one who ever really came forward for the defense to prove to the jury's satisfaction that the defendant was insane," Mr. McCarthy said.

Richard E. Salkin, the prosecutor, said he was relieved that the trial was over. He also said he thought that Mr. De La Roche's confession to all four murders 12 hours after they had occurred was instrumental to the verdict.

## Rights Violation Charged

"The confession . . . was devastating," Mr. Salkin said. "You have a man, and the man is saying what and why he did it."

Mr. Taylor said he would appeal principally on the ground that the police had violated Mr. De La Roche's constitutional rights in obtaining the confession. Judge Madden had ruled otherwise during the trial.

The four members of the De La Roche family were all shot to death as they slept eight days after Harry had returned on Thanksgiving furlough from his first three months at the Citadel.

The family had been widely known in Montvale, a small white-collar suburb in northern New Jersey, some 25 miles from midtown Manhattan. They were generally well-liked and appeared to most neighbors and friends to be a normal and well-adjusted family.

The father was an import official for the Ford Motor Company in Newark. He was active in Montvale's Boys Club, Boy Scouts and the Athletic Club. He was a gun enthusiast, and kept in his modest two-story frame house a .22-caliber rifle and three pistols—a 10-shot .22-caliber automatic, a .38-caliber Smith and Wesson, and a 9-mm. automatic.

His wife also was popular in Montvale. She worked in the library and for the Chamber of Commerce, and earned extra money for the family by working as a regional distributor for a county newspaper.

## Brothers More Outgoing

Ronald and Eric were more outgoing and athletic than Harry Jr., who stood 6 feet 3 inches tall and was frequently the butt of jokes and pranks by his peers. Harry had little interest in girls or dating and spent most of his free time collecting old coins, tinkering with his car and teaching target shooting at a rifle range in the neighboring community of Park Ridge.

Although the elder De La Roche Sr. frequently boasted about his three sons, he was also known to be a strict disciplinarian with a quick temper. He wanted Harry Jr., upon graduation from high school, to begin pursuing a military career. Poor eyesight doomed the boy's admission applications to the United States Military, Naval and Air Force Academies. Harry Jr. eventually settled on the Citadel.

But from the moment he enrolled for freshmen orientation there in August of

1976, he developed a strong dislike for the school. He testified that he had run-ins with his company sergeant and was often physically abused, harassed, and hazed by upper-class students.

Harry's grades were poor and he wanted to quit. But his parents urged him to remain at the Citadel. "Quitters are failures," he father wrote once, according to trial testimony.

## At Discotheque Before Slayings

Just before midnight on Nov. 27, 1976, he went by himself to a discotheque in Rockland County, N. Y., drank three beers, left for home, drank several more beers in his car, and arrived at his house around 2:30 A.M. After taking off his military jump boots and Army field jacket, and his pants and socks, he sat in his room for several minutes.

"I was thinking about what I was going

to do, thinking I can't go back," he later told the police in a 21-page confession given voluntarily 12 hours after he had shot his parents and brothers. "I really couldn't tell my parents because they wouldn't listen."

For the next several minutes, he paced the darkened hallway between his room and his parents' room, holding the 10-shot, .22-caliber target pistol.

"Finally I walked into my parents' room, got real close to my father, must have stood in his room about a half an hour just holding the pistol up," he said in the confession. "Finally I said 'I can't go back,' closed my eyes and pulled the trigger and that set it off, shot my mother right then and there, and I went to my brothers' room."

Mr. and Mrs. De La Roche, both shot twice in the face, died instantly. Then Ronald was shot fatally once in the face as he lay half-awake. Then he shot Eric five times, according to medical testimony, and returned to his own room. But Eric was not dead.

Harry admitted that he heard "heavy breathing" from Eric's room. "I went back to my brothers' room, and there was Eric. He was getting up and trying to get out. . . I put my hand over his eyes and said, 'Eric, go to sleep, go to sleep, it's just a dream,' trying to calm him down. Then he got up and started screaming and I hit him with the pistol butt on the head. Then he went down to the ground. I hit him again."

Mr. Taylor fought strenuously against admission of that confession as evidence. But Judge Madden ruled that Harry had voluntarily waived his constitutional rights to remain silent before he made the admissions and allowed the confession into evidence.

The defense then concentrated on trying to prove that Harry killed only Ronald in a seige of temporary insanity after Ronald had killed his parents and Eric after an argument with his father over the use of marijuana use.

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microfilm.

Associated Press  
Harry De La Roche Jr.

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# DE LA ROCHE TESTIFIES BROTHER WAS KILLER

## He Says He Slew Ronald After Discovering the Other Bodies— Repudiates His Confession

By ROBERT HANLEY  
Special to The New York Times

HACKENSACK, Jan. 19—Harry De La Roche Jr. testified today at his murder trial that he shot his brother repeatedly after returning home from a discothèque and finding his parents shot to death and his youngest brother, Eric, dying in a pool of blood on his bed.

He said he thought he heard Eric "moan (and groan)."

"That flipped me out a bit because Eric was always trying to be just like me," he said. "It was like seeing a part of me die."

Mr. De La Roche said he noticed a pistol lying on a bedroom window sill as his other brother, Ronald, sat at the foot of his bed, asking Harry to help him.

"I just picked it up and started pulling the trigger," he said. "I just kept pulling the trigger."

Mr. De La Roche's account today of the four murders in the De La Roche family home in Montvale on Nov. 18, 1976, directly contradicted his confession, which was read to the jury last Friday, that he killed his parents, Harry and Mary Jane, and Ronald and Eric because his father would not let him quit his military studies at the Citadel in South Carolina.

As he repudiated his earlier admissions, Mr. De La Roche spoke in a firm and steady voice and showed little emotion as he described the scene he said he had encountered, except for his brief digression about Eric's envy of him and attempts to emulate him. Mr. De La Roche, who usually tilts slightly and rests his chin in his hand while testifying, sat erectly in the witness chair throughout his 60-minute, detailed account of his movements the night his family was murdered.

### Vague on Later Events

As the defense attorney, John R. Taylor, led the defendant, a gaunt and pale 19-year-old, through the narrative, Mr. De La Roche was explicit about all his actions until the time he said he discovered the bodies.

He remembered driving around early in the evening with a friend in his car; returning home and taking his mother's car to the discothèque in New City, N.Y.; being embarrassed about his Citadel T-shirt, which was adorned with a Mickey Mouse figure dressed in a military uniform; drinking three bottles of beer; talking to a discothèque patron about mili-

tary life, and overhearing someone in the men's room say it was 2:15 A.M.

Once Mr. De La Roche's narrative brought him back home and into the death scene, he became vague about his recollections after shooting Ronald as Eric lay dying.

Before about 200 spectators that filled a county court room here, he said he first noticed Ronald sitting at the end of his bed, "looking a little dopey or shocked or something."

"I said, 'Hey, what's up,' or something like that," he recalled asking after entering Ronald's bedroom.

He said he saw Eric in the pool of blood. Then he said he went to his parents' room "wondering what's happening."

### Felt for Father's Pulse

"I saw my parents and the blood and I reached for my father and tried for a pulse," he said. "I've had extra first aid," he added, explaining how he was once instructed on pulse detection. Realizing both parents were dead, he said, he went back to Ronald to find out "what happened and why."

"He spoke to me, but it wasn't his normal voice. It was a little slurred," he said. Mr. De La Roche then quoted Ronald as saying his father had discovered Ronald's "pot paraphernalia" and was going to "turn him in to the police."

"My father was the type to hit first and ask questions later," he said, adding that his father was "extremely" opposed to drug usage.

He quoted Ronald as saying that his father had threatened to shoot both the brothers if he ever caught them with drugs.

"He told me he did it and he told me how and he told me why, because he was afraid of the drug bit," Mr. De La Roche testified.

At that point, he said, he heard Eric's moans, which, he said, touched off his shooting Ronald.

Immediately after dropping the gun, he said it "took a minute to come anywhere close to being calm. I realized he was shot. And I said, 'what have I done? Now I'm going to be blamed for all four, which I didn't do?'"

Once Mr. De La Roche concludes his testimony tomorrow and undergoes cross-examination by the prosecutor, Richard E. Salkin, a psychiatrist, is expected to testify for the defense about the defendant's mental state immediately after the murders.



## De La Roche Found Guilty in Killing Of Family and Given Life Sentence

By ROBERT HANLEY Special to The New York Times

New York Times 1857-Current; Jan 27, 1979; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2001)  
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# De La Roche Found Guilty in Killing Of Family and Given Life Sentence

By ROBERT HANLEY

Special to The New York Times

HACKENSACK, Jan. 26—Harry De La Roche Jr. was found guilty today of first-degree murder for fatally shooting his parents and two younger brothers in their home in Montvale 14 months ago and was sentenced to life in prison.

Judge James F. Madden of Superior Court imposed concurrent life terms for each of the four counts of murder, the mandatory sentence for first-degree murder convictions in New Jersey. Mr. De La Roche would be eligible for parole after serving 14 years 8 months. His lawyer, James R. Taylor, said he would appeal the verdict.

Mr. De La Roche, a pale, thin 19-year-old former cadet at the Citadel in Charleston, S.C., showed no emotion as the verdict was announced by the jury foreman, Mrs. Marise Althouse.

### Offers No Statement

As he had for much of the trial that opened three weeks ago, Mr. De La Roche sat slightly hunched and stared straight ahead, his chin resting in his right hand. He maintained the same posture and demeanor while the seven men and five women on the panel were polled individually on each of the murder charges.

Then, on instruction, he rose for sentencing and stood erectly between his attorney, Mr. Taylor, and the Rev. Charles Innendorf, the family's pastor.

Judge Madden asked the defendant if he wanted to speak.

"No, sir," Mr. De La Roche replied softly.

After the sentencing, Mr. De La Roche spoke animatedly for about 20 seconds to Mr. Taylor before being handcuffed by sheriff's deputies and led out of the courtroom.

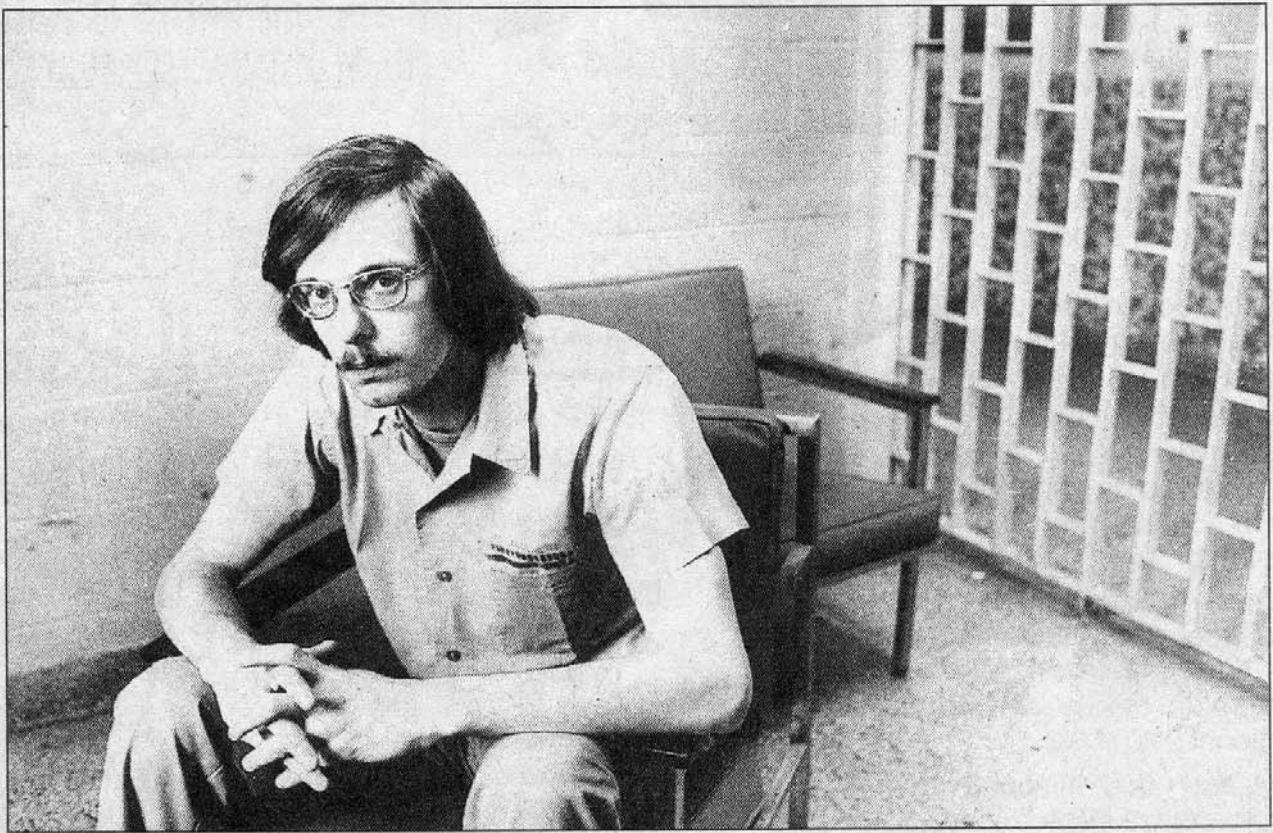
The verdict, reached after six and a half hours of deliberation over two days, was the most severe that could have been returned against Mr. De La Roche. The jurors turned aside two other possible findings Judge Madden had left open to them: second-degree murder and acquittal by reason of legal insanity.

The insanity defense to all four murders was first raised by Mr. Taylor on the eve of deliberations on Tuesday when he abandoned an earlier defense that Mr. De La Roche killed only his 15-year-old brother Ronald after Ronald had killed his parents, Harry Sr., 44, Mary Jane, 50, and his other brother, Eric, 12, on Nov. 28, 1976.

In that new defense, Mr. Taylor contended that Harry's anxieties over returning to what he termed the "private hell" at the Citadel led to an overwhelming psychosis that resulted in all four shootings.

The jurors were chosen in Camden County so they would not be subject to pretrial publicity and were sequestered

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PETER MONSEES/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Harry De La Roche Jr. in prison in 1980. De La Roche, who in 1976 killed his mother, father and two brothers in Montvale, will serve more time after being denied parole Wednesday.

# Man who killed his family in 1976 is denied parole

By **CAROLYN SALAZAR**  
STAFF WRITER

A man who has served nearly three decades in prison for killing his family in Montvale was denied parole Wednesday.

Harry De La Roche Jr., who killed his mother, father and two brothers on Thanksgiving Day in 1976, will serve at least 18 to 36 more months in prison before he is eligible for release, said state Parole Board spokesman Neal Buccino.

The 11-member board denied De La Roche's request,

citing his "lack of insight into criminal behavior" and his "denial of crime."

In its report, the board said it determined that a "substantial likelihood exists" that he would commit a new crime if released.

De La Roche, now 48, was a freshman in college when he shot his parents and brothers while they slept in their East Grand Avenue home. The case — which inspired a book and, more recently, a documentary — is considered one of the state's most horrific crimes.

De La Roche initially con-

fessed and then recanted, blaming the deaths on one of his brothers. He was convicted in 1978 and has been denied parole at least three times since. He is confined in South Woods State Prison in Cumberland County.

The Parole Board will meet again within the next 45 days to determine De La Roche's next parole eligibility date, Buccino said. The board could decide to make him eligible in 18 to 36 months but could go higher based on the circumstances of the case, he said.

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# Movie to tell tale of Montvale murders

BY MELISSA MEISEL  
EDITOR

## MONTVALE

It was a matter of intrigue, according to Jon Doscher. As a freshman at Pascack Hills High School in 1985, he heard a shocking story about a local homicide from Tony Jannicelli, a detective (now chief) at the Woodcliff Lake Police Department. It was the tale of Harry De La Roche, a young man who murdered four of his family members almost 10 years prior on Thanksgiving weekend.

Now, as an actor and producer, Doscher and East Coast film production company Starline Films are developing the true story of "Anyone's Son," originally published in a 1979 book of the same name. Plans to begin shooting the motion picture start in September 2006, with a targeted theatrical release of November 2007.

Starline Films announced last



DE LA ROCHE

month the completion of a contractual agreement with the book's author, Roberta Roesch, and De La Roche to produce the film.

A documentary on the topic will also be made, tentatively titled, "Harry...A Communication Breakdown."

"It all stems from passionate storytelling," says Doscher about the De La Roche project. "First, you need to be obsessed with a par-

ticular story, whether its fact or fiction. Second, you need to have a clear vision, and an understanding of the message you wish to convey."

In July, Doscher visited De La Roche, who was convicted on four counts of murder and is currently serving a lifetime prison sentence, for an interview that was "extremely productive and ultimately will be very essential in telling the story as accurately as possible."

Starline is aggressively trying to involve the public in the making

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PHOTO COURTESY STARLINE FILMS

■ Doscher with book author Roesch.

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to involve the public in the making of "Anyone's Son." They have formed a Professional Advisory Committee to help ensure accuracy, including and Woodcliff Lake Police Sgt. Bruce Conway and Carl Olsen, a retired Montvale police officer.

A Pascack Hills Alumni Committee was also established, and according to Jonathan Moncrief, 1986 PHHS alumnus and screenwriter/consultant for the project, "We've been getting a tremendous amount of feedback, with nearly 200 past alumni

responding, and more coming in each day looking to assist us."

Ryan Bagley, a 1993 PHHS graduate, is one of the many alumni involved in the making of the film. He tells Pascack Press: "He (Doscher) has been talking about making this movie for a while now, which gave me interest in not only the film but also the story itself. Jon told me he has spoken to Harry and a significant amount of his classmates, and they all tell different versions - which clearly brings myth to the story."

For more information, go to [www.anyonesson.com](http://www.anyonesson.com).



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Actor/producer sheds light on showbiz realities

'If you look at Tom Cruise, don't think he made it to where he is on looks and talent alone. He's extremely savvy and very creative. The same thing with Beatty and Robert Redford and all of these other guys... they have to have business skills to make it where they are.'

Jon Doscher

'80s, Doscher studied drama at Pascaack Hills High School and would spend hours every weekend filming home movies with two friends, Bruce Redman and Rick Hurvitz, and emulating their then-favorite "Saturday Night Live" cast members, Billy Crystal and Martin Short. In a unique coincidence, Doscher's childhood friends have gone on to work on such television programs as "Survivor," "Pimp My Ride" and "The Contender."

"It's crazy to still be doing the same thing 20 years later — only now to be getting paid for it!" Doscher said.

Despite his interest in the entertainment industry, Doscher would start Doscher's Power Clean Inc. after a brief stint at Bergen Community College. His next endeavor was creating a home-improvement magazine, *Home Contractor's Revizite*.

The former contractor began his segue into films in a most unusual way. In 1999, he sent three-time Oscar-winner Jack Nicholson a box of expensive cigars, along with a note asking for advice on whether to study acting in Los Angeles or New York City. When he received no reply, Doscher sent another note telling the screen legend how expensive the cigars were and again requested a reply.

Surprisingly, Nicholson did get back to him, and although the actor pointed out the inappropriateness of quoting a gift price, he did wish the young man well in his future.

It was only after the aspiring actor, while working as a contractor, befriended actor Danny Aiello, that Doscher's movie dreams came alive.

Having made the decision to pursue acting, Doscher attended the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in New York City until Aiello persuaded him to leave school and focus on auditions. After some bit parts in films like "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Analyze That," as well as the mob drama "This Thing of Ours," Doscher was cast as one of the leads in "Remedy" (co-starring Vincent Pastore, Frank Vincent and Arthur Nascarella of "Sopranos" fame), which was released on video and DVD this week. Local residents may recognize many of the Montville, Saddle River and Washington Township locations used in the filming of "Remedy." The film also features a cameo by former Woodcliff Lake mayor Josephine Higgins as an ambulance driver.

"I just loved the part I was playing," Doscher said of his role as drug-addicted dentist Evan Quinn. "It brought comedy to a dark and disturbing story line. It was like telling a horrible joke and getting a big laugh."

For his next project, "4Chosen," Doscher will be producing a film based on the 1998 shooting of four African-Americans by white State Troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike in Washington Township. The four were on their way to basketball tryout in North Carolina. The case shed light on the issue of racial profiling and police corruption.

"'4Chosen' is an incredible human-interest story," said Doscher. "It changed laws. It changed the way police interact with minorities. These young men had all their dreams ripped away but they didn't give up. They became stronger and wiser men... but they still have that look in their eye — that they'll never be able to play pro

basketball!" Despite an extremely hectic schedule and long hours, Doscher is enjoying his work as producer. "A producer is responsible for everything you see on that screen, and it's a three-year project," he said. "The producer picks the project, outlines a film, hires a screenwriter, brands a film (by creating a look or a tagline and a message). Then the producer tries to pitch the project to an independent financier. Everyone thinks that's the hardest part, but it isn't."

As proof, Doscher points out that despite his film's modest budget, A-list talent has been attracted to the story. "Right now, Jack Nicholson's agent is calling me to be in the film (as attorney David Ironman, who represented the four young men in their lawsuit) even though I've really only made one film," Doscher said. "Money doesn't buy a film. You could have a billion dollars and it won't matter. These guys don't need the money."

Doscher admits that "4Chosen" is one of the few screenplays he has actually read since he's "usually bored after page three. They're difficult to be engaged by."

The five-year Village resident remains mum on his own personal life, explaining that the less audiences know about an actor's private life, the more convincing character they can portray onscreen. ("Why see Ben Affleck in a film for \$10 when you could just turn on a television?")

Doscher said his love of acting has not subsided as his focus has shifted to producing. He is enthralled with the work of fine actors and is mesmerized by the art.

"I prefer acting, but not because everyone just wants to be a movie star. Acting is like hitting a golf ball and putting it in the hole. An actor has to be passionate, but they have to have talent. It's very technical," he said. "Thousands of things have to happen for a great performance."

One such recent performance that awed Doscher was Daniel Day Lewis Golden Globe and Academy Award-nominated turn



PHOTO COURTESY OF STARLINE FILMS

Ridgewood movie producer and actor Jon Doscher with friend Danny Aiello at the premiere of Doscher's film "Remedy," which was released on DVD and video last week.

as the sadistic Bill the Butcher in Martin Scorsese's "Gangs of New York." The mild-mannered actor is said to have remained in character even off-set while the film was shot.

"It's was absolutely amazing," Doscher said. "How do you take this ruthless killer and make him someone that you'd like to hang out with? And he's nothing like that character in real life, either."

Unfortunately, Doscher said the film industry changed again after the tremendous success of science-fiction work like "Star Wars" in the late '70s and the emergence of the over-the-top action movies in the '80s. Money soon became the top priority of moviemakers, just as it has been in all other industries.

Doscher longs for the days when audiences walked into classics like "Chinatown" and "Dog Day Afternoon" — movies, he says, that were made for art's sake, rather than profit — and he feels that a resurgence will happen in the next few years.

Doscher credits his business background with helping him achieve success and believes that having a strong business sense is almost essential to make it in the business.

"If you look at Tom Cruise, don't think he made it to where he is on looks and talent alone. He's extremely savvy and very creative," Doscher said. "The same thing with Beatty and Robert Redford and all of these other guys; sure, they're good looking and talented, but they have to have business skills to make it where they are."

There are, however, exceptions to the rule.

"Johnny Depp is a freak of nature," Doscher said. "He can rely solely on his talent. He can probably [bleep] up a basketball."

When asked what kinds of films he hopes to spend his career making, Doscher definitely leans towards the darker, more serious material, since that is what will have the most impact on viewers. "Dramatic films are moving," he said. "I like ones that audiences can identify with and feel empowered by when they leave the theater. Bad things happen, but there can always be good that comes from the bad."

"I like people to smile and raise their eyebrows and say, 'That was interesting.'"

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