

# Danny Aiello inspires filmmaker

BY MORGAN KORN  
FOR TOWN JOURNAL

Bergen County native Jon Doscher always felt he needed to prove something.

He joined extracurricular activities as a student at Pascack Hills High School and competed on varsity athletic teams.

After a brief stint at community college, he channeled his energy into a local restoration/power washing company, "Doscher's Restoration," building his small company into a well-known and profitable county operation.

However, Doscher still wanted more. Burnt out from the contracting business and looking for a challenging yet exciting new career, he returned to a pastime he always enjoyed but never pursued - acting.

But it wasn't until meeting Saddle River resident and distinguished actor Danny Aiello did Doscher finally achieve what he'd been seeking all this time.

"Danny was a client of mine and he advised me to start auditioning and leave acting school," Doscher said from his office in Upper Saddle River. "He influenced me that I could do it."

Aiello said he felt compelled to offer his guidance despite Doscher's lack of acting experience and the constant barrage of advice Aiello regularly received by others.

"People like him - he's bright and aggressive but not in an overbearing way - he'll go far in this business," said Aiello.

Almost five years later, that encouragement still resonates in Doscher's mind. Doscher left the Manhattan-based Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute and soon auditioned for movies, winning small

roles in "Analyze That" and "Sweet Home Alabama."

But he soon realized that acting was far more physically demanding and emotionally draining than what he first imagined. He then applied his management background and decided to expand his leverage in Hollywood and become a movie producer - a decision that has proven itself to be the key to Doscher's recent success.

**'People like him...he'll go far in this business.'**

DANNY AIELLO  
ACTOR, SADDLE RIVER RESIDENT

"I've always been a storyteller because it's the ultimate form of expression, the reason why I like acting," he said.

"But I had to have some sort of control over my destiny, which is why I wanted to produce."

He founded Starline Films, an independent film production company with headquarters in Upper Saddle River. Acting as producer, Doscher attained the power to produce the movies he wanted to see, while at the same time utilizing his acting ability for lead roles.

Doscher's first movie, "Remedy," a dark drama featuring Ace Frehley from the rock group "KISS" and Vincent "Big Pussy" Pastore from "The Sopranos," showcased his production and acting capabilities.

He chose to film the drama in the only place he knew and breathed - Bergen County. Scenes featured local country residents, residences and businesses; even former Woodcliff Lake Mayor Josephine Higgins drove the ambulance in the film.

After being presented at the American Film Market in Los Angeles and France's Cannes Film Festival, many film distribution companies approached Doscher for a national release; "Remedy" will also be available in local Blockbuster Video stores starting Tuesday, March 29.



Photo courtesy of Jon Doscher  
Bergen County native and film director, Jon Doscher, on location during the filming of his movie "Remedy" set to hit local Blockbuster Video stores Tuesday, March 29.

Relishing in the success of both his first movie production and leading movie role, Doscher used his momentum to tackle one of his largest projects to date - the movie, "4Chosen."

Based on the 1998 real-life story of four minority basketball players shot by New Jersey state troopers on their way to a North Carolina basketball camp, Doscher said he wanted the movie to expose issues that still deeply affect people in the United States seven years later: racial profiling, corruption in police departments and the willpower to survive and live through calamitous circumstances.

Although the incident continues to be a sensitive and emotional one for those involved, the story touched Doscher so profoundly that he's spent the last nine months negotiating and developing it to become a movie reality.

"I remember the incident and

was simply moved - it's really an amazing story," he said. "They were victims of circumstance, victims of society - yet you can take this tragic event and be positive."

The movie would be entirely shot in central New Jersey and Doscher hoped to distribute the film in more than 3,500 national theaters.

He has aggressively contacted experienced actors and screenwriters to work on the movie; presently Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson have expressed interest in the lead roles.

Danny Reyes, one of the four basketball players in the car that fateful night, said he's grateful to Doscher for wanting to share his story with the masses, and believes in the movie's potential so much that he frequently collaborates with Doscher on the movie's elements and direction.

"Hopefully ignorant people will

learn from this and certain stereotypes will end," Reyes commented. "(The incident) changed my life completely but that doesn't mean to give up on life. Even when you're down and out, never give up."

And that life mantra lived by the four men proved to Doscher that audiences would want to watch and become involved in the lives of those individuals.

With a budget of \$55 million, an extensive financial backing for an independent film company, Doscher said people should care about that 1998 night on the New Jersey Turnpike because of the powerful message it sends.

"I feel an obligation to entertain," Doscher noted. "And this movie sends the message that this could have happened to anyone and they (the survivors) overcame it with strength and wisdom."