

THE MAVERICK

FILM PRODUCER JON DOSCHER

AS TOLD TO VINCENT CAVALIER

Photo by Greg Pallante

How does a guy jump from making home improvements to making movies? Ask Jon Doscher, graduate of Pascack Hills High School's Class of 1989. After befriending one of his clients, actor Danny Aiello, the Woodcliff Lake native abandoned his self-made business and began auditioning for film roles. Today, Doscher can also be found behind the scenes, running his own production company, Starline Films. He is currently working on *Anyone's Son*, the story of fellow Pascack Hills grad Harry De La Roche, who murdered his entire family, and *4Chosen*, about four minority youths that were mistakenly shot by New Jersey state troopers. It was a challenge getting from Point A (contractor to the stars) to Point B (star filmmaker), but Doscher says one simple rule got him through – believe in your story and someone will believe in you.

THE BIG LEAP

I started training as an actor at night at Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute. Then I met Danny Aiello, who was a customer of mine, and he encouraged me to leave acting school and start auditioning. I got cast in *This Thing of Ours* and that got me into *Remedy*. Once I made *Remedy* I realized that this is what I want to do. I felt that I had the confidence and the ability to make a motion picture. And when I did, I said, "That's it." I sold my company, and started Starline.

GARDEN STATE

I challenge any city with the people from New Jersey. We're a very passionate and hardworking people. It's the pace of living. Bergen County – it's expensive to live here; it's hard to survive here. So it's a demanding pace. Quite frankly the greatest actors of all time are from New Jersey: Meryl Streep, Susan Sarandon, Jack Nicholson, Frank Sinatra, Kevin Spacey and Tom Cruise... It's a breeding ground for entertainment artists.

INTERVIEW WITH A MURDERER

You don't know what to expect. Here's a man (Harry De La Roche, subject of *Anyone's Son*) that's been incarcerated since he was 18. Now he's 47, and he hasn't even had a visitor in 15 years. And we show up. They brought him over, and I tried to play it down, tried to play it relaxed and sort of defuse him if he was a little intimidated. I said, "Hey, how's it going? Thanks for having us come down..." and I made it almost too casual where he thought it was strange. Just like anything else, you start slow and you put your foot in the water before you dive in.

THE HOLLYWOOD BRIER PATCH

It's a tough gig, and I don't recommend it for anyone. I've been through it. I'm still going through it for all the movies. It's complicated because these managers and agents are the gatekeepers for the talent. If they slip or do something that turns the client off, they're out of business. So, they are afraid to shoot. It's that simple. They're very timid in making a decision on whether to present the project to their actor. They want to know that the money's there. And obviously, the story needs to be good. ♦

