

BROOKLYN P · E · O · P · L · E

By Ryn Gargulinski

"This is my court...anybody tells me how to run my life. I'll stuff him in an ice box one limb at a time," says Brooklynite Paulie, a drug addict and wiseguy on a crash course with drugs and hookers. He defends his turf in south Brooklyn while taking a wayward younger cousin under his wing along for a long spiral downward.

The character Paulie, played by Paul Bracco, is the star of the newly-created

movie *The Court*, produced by Red Hook Films, Inc.

The movie was filmed in March and April of this year by the production company, which was established in January by 25-year-old Bracco and run out of his home on Sackett Street.

Bracco, through a strong network of friends, family and business associates, was able to raise \$50,000 and pull together "an amazing cast and crew" through contacts including those he had made bartending in Manhattan and

placing an ad in *Backstage* magazine.

Once the cast was set, the screenplay having already been written by Bracco over a three-year period, the cameras were up and rolling all over south Brooklyn, with shooting completed in about a month.

"It was a lot of fun...and a little scary," says Bracco of the venue. The five-man cast stars Bracco, who earned an acting degree from Boston University, along with Fred Berman, Scott Conte, Jeff Mackin and Vinny Vella.

"Everyone pulled together," says Bracco of the crew who toiled long hours, six days a week. Their aim was to transfer the story of Paulie from Bracco's imagination into concrete reality on film.

Final Cut

The film, named both after Court Street and the idea of games played in the movie, is currently in its final stages with Bracco and crew working on piecing the soundtrack together. The plan is to submit the final cut to film festivals, hoping for

exposure and the possibility of a run on the big screen.

Bracco's intentions go up from there. "I would love to someday be in the same league with DeNiro, Pacino, Scorsese, Spielberg," explains Bracco, who has a firm grasp on -- and passion for -- creating.

Brooklyn Turf

Although his character in *The Court* may seem overly possessive about his turf, Bracco promises not to cut off any limbs if you run into him on the street. Instead, this third generation Italian is joyous about rediscovering his family roots -- Red Hook is the neighborhood in which his great grandparents from Sicily settled and his grandparents were born.

His parents made the "normal transition" from Brooklyn to Staten Island to New Jersey, where Bracco attend high school in Holmdell, eventually moving on to Boston to pursue his acting degree, and then right back into the heart of Brooklyn. It was in Boston that he met his wife, Tammy, "literally the girl next door."

"It's home," Bracco says of Brooklyn. "It's just something about this neighborhood that makes it one big family."

He specifically remembers feasts spanning the streets and his grandfather who owned a butcher shop in the downtown Brooklyn area where Bracco used to spend many a weekend. Other family members -- which include a younger brother and sister and plenty of cousins -- always surrounded Bracco with the love of the arts.

His other grandfather was a musician; his father worked on Wall Street and had gigs on the weekends, complete with a jazz band in the basement.

The 'Write' Stuff

Bracco, who has seven other screenplays in the works, finds ideas by observing "neighborhood comedy...to more of a south Brooklyn absurdism."

"Sometimes it comes to you, sometimes it doesn't," Bracco says. "My main goal is to do what I love the most -- create."



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