

Getting in and out of 'Limbo'

They made a movie inspired by the story of their lives

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Whoever says dreams can't come true obviously hasn't dreamed hard enough. The dreams of four Pierce College students are in the process of becoming reality.

Joe Rosati attended Pierce College 15 years ago. He headed south and started up a night-club. But after awhile, he started losing money and the club went bankrupt. Rosati's life was in a state of limbo.

He came back to Pierce last year "on a whim" and it was on that whim that put him in Patrick Daugherty's drama classes where he met three of his best friends, Mike Winfrey, Ben Warner and Nick Snapp.

"There was such amazing energy," Rosati said. "It all started there."

Winfrey started to take notes on his friend's life from low points to high points. He knew

there was a story to be told.

With a very small budget, they started filming in the south Puget Sound area at businesses and locations that, they believe, need recognition. The locations let them use their facilities for free.

"We want to do something that everyone involved can advance," Rosati said. "Whether it's their business or their acting career. I think we can make it a positive thing for everybody."

Winfrey posted on the online community MySpace looking for music.

"I got six or seven CDs and press releases," Winfrey said. "All these people are helping us out."

They all are more than just actors. Rosati is the networking guy, Winfrey is the writer, Warner puts in comedic and creative ideas, and Snapp visualizes the ideas and puts them on film.

"It was awesome to have it turn into something," Rosati said.

Stacy Wagoner sat down with three of the four friends (Joe Rosati, Mike Winfrey and Ben Warner — Nick Snapp could not make it to the interview) to talk about "Limbo." The conversation was too funny to summarize, so The Pioneer decided to print portions of the interview.

The back story.

Joe: I went to Pierce in 89-91. They didn't know. First of all they didn't know I was about a decade older than them. They were wondering why I was back here and Mike starting saying, "I gotta hear more about this."

Ben: Actually, to be real, everyone else in the class was like "Why is Joe coming back?" I was just like, "You are a ridiculously cool man." He doesn't have a wife. He's still in college, so that's access to younger chicks. Joe is a mentor to me.

Joe: He has said that to me.

That starts off with how it came to be what it is. It was written off of experiences. Like the scene at the dollar store... I did go into the dollar store to buy oil for my car because I'm not wealthy. I ran across the sunglasses rack. I was deciding for a couple of minutes which pair of sunglasses I should buy. Mike's character is the one that said it to me. But in my own mind I'm thinking "why am I trying to decide between two dollar pairs of sunglasses. When I could just buy both and it's less of a strain on the mind. It's just a dollar.

This is an example of how the scene came to play. I told Mike the story and he made his character go "Dude, get them both, they're only a dollar." And that's how the story was written with real life things. When I'm realizing my own ridiculousness of trying to make a decision when I don't have to make the decision.

Mike: You were making things more complicated than they should be.

Joe: We want you to relate to the characters like the tragedy, but not necessarily tragedy, but me losing it and Mike thinks he's the guy that has all the answers. But he doesn't. His advice does not work.

Mike: It doesn't work for anybody but myself even then it rarely works for me.

Joe: He gets excited when it works. He doesn't come across with hey I've got all the answers. Then Nick's married. So he always has to get permission just to come hang out with us. He's torn between, "What can I do to go hang out with my friends and when do I have to ask my wife." So some people who are married can relate to that. And then there's...

Mike: Ben.

Joe: Yeah, I don't even need to say anything. He's himself in the movie.

Mike: He's himself. He's trying to be a comedian in the movie. Not because he thinks he's funny because everyone else thinks he's funny. At the end of movie he sets

everybody out. We all have our problems and that's the point of the movie.

Joe: It gets me to kind of realize that I'm not the only person with the problem. There's definitely some reality in there, it's not all funny. It starts with me walking on the railroad tracks contemplating suicide. So it doesn't start off really funny.

Ben: I'd like to change that.

Joe: No, that's not going to happen.

Ben: I'm just along for the ride. I talk about stuff and sometimes they put my ideas in. It's definitely not a Ben Warner movie.

On filming locations.

Mike: We try to encompass a lot of cool places in Tacoma. There's a lot of cool clubs in Tacoma that no one knows about or it gets very small business and should get a lot more. There's a cool lounge nightclub type of thing on top of the Sheridon called the Vertigo Lounge.

Ben: And also in Parkland there's this place called Foxy's and it doesn't get any recognition and I'm tired of that. I show up there twice a week. Basically, we're all single and we're in it for the chicks. If you're not an attractive man, you have to find another angle to get a girlfriend. I've been struggling for four years now.

Joe: That's not based on looks. You are an attractive man.

Ben: I just strike out. The ball is coming right at me and I swing and I'm like "where'd it go? It's behind me. I dropped it. I dropped the ball."

Honestly nervous about the film. I'm afraid to be on something and then have it be like "oh Ben your character, he's in the movie."

Joe: Your character? I'm going to be looked at as pathetic.

Mike: And I'm going to look like I'm an ass.

And Nick's going to be like a pushover.

Joe: It's acting. We have nothing to fear.

On Ben's character

Mike: He's naked in the movie, but you don't actually see anything.

Ben: Yeah, just my penis.

Joe and Mike laugh.

Ben: Plus we get backup dancers now and that's what I've always wanted.

Turning a dream to reality.

Joe: It's a dream come true. When I came back here I was thinking it would be cool if I could meet people with the same interests and it actually happened. I couldn't come back here and have designed what happened any better than it did.

Mike: It worked perfectly. You couldn't have written a better movie. *(He gasps.)*

Look for the movie at The Grand Cinema on Fawcett Avenue in Tacoma in August.