

Thursday, March 09, 2006

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## Question of the Week

**Question:** The El Segundo City Council voted to raise its pay 86 percent at its meeting Tuesday night over objections by many residents, citing other benefits the council members receive (see story, Page 16). Council defended its actions by stating there have been no raises since 1990. Councilman Eric Busch cast the dissenting vote and asked that his pay not be raised for the duration of his term.

*\* Do you think the pay raise is too much or a fair compensation for the position?*

*\* What do you think the position should pay?*

*\* Should the city instigate an annual review for these positions, including the city clerk, city treasurer and commission members whose pay was also raised Tuesday night?*

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## Stepping Out

### Getting a Foot in the Door (3/9)

By Michael Hixon

(Updated: Thursday, March 9, 2006 9:56 AM PST)

From working as a production assistant on multimillion-dollar studio productions to getting his own small-budget feature off the ground, Hermosa Beach resident Scott Yamano has seen firsthand the extremes of filmmaking.



Scott Yamano

As a writer and producer, Yamano will see his first produced feature film, "Chandler Hall," make its world premiere at the Other Venice Film Festival Saturday, March 18. With a budget of less than \$200,000, "Chandler Hall," the story of three friends who get involved in drug dealing with deadly results, was made with his childhood friend and director Jeremy Pollack.

"In the movie business, you have to make it happen yourself," Yamano said. "You can take the route of trying to work your way up the ladder or you can go the route of trying to make your own films. One day, my friend Jeremy and I decided to put something together and make a film ourselves. We worked together for about a day and thought about a good story to write that would be marketable for our generation, what they like watching. I wrote the script and we made the movie a couple of months later."

Yamano's last two studio films working as a production assistant were both Adam Sandler vehicles, "The Longest Yard" and the yet-to-be-released "Click." Yamano took a month off during the filming of "Click" to work on "Chandler Hall."

"The last couple of movies I worked on were \$80 million movies, which is good to see that side of the business because you get to learn a lot," Yamano said. "But on the other hand, it's a million times better doing it yourself. We shot for 12 days and the amount I learned in that span of time is more than I learned on all the movies I've ever worked on. But filmmaking is a huge risk."

He added, "It's crazy going from the set of a studio film where the food budget is more than \$1 million and then going to our film where I'm scraping together whatever I can for the crew. You have to start somewhere."

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With budget and casting issues, "Chandler Hall" almost didn't get made. Early on, the production was shut down because they didn't have enough money. Then after raising enough funds to start the film, tragedy nearly struck on the set.

"On the first day of shooting, five hours in, one of our actors, whose name will remain anonymous, fell down and had a seizure right in the middle of the f##### set," Yamano said. "We thought he was joking around and basically two ambulances had to come take him away. With the size of our budget, there was no leeway. You miss one day and you're done. Basically Jeremy was like, he can act, 'I'm the only person who can do this so I guess I have to do this.' He ended up being the actor and director. It was one of the worst days of my life but it ended up being OK."

With the setbacks, Yamano remained worried about completing the film, even though it went smoothly the rest of the way.

"The weird thing about it is every single day I felt like, 'I hope nothing goes wrong and I can't wait for this day to be over,'" he said. "But as it happened, it was the most amazing experience in my life. If one thing goes wrong and you have to shut down, you're up s### creek."

Raised in Agoura Hills, Yamano attended the University of Arizona where he was a business major. He wished now he focused more on media arts classes but he's "happy where I'm at." He said he won't consider himself a writer until he sells his first script.

Besides finishing up a couple of screenplays, Yamano is currently working on the sequel to "Fantastic Four" and shooting a reality show pilot. But his main focus now is trying to get "Chandler Hall" sold.

"If it doesn't get bought, it's a great movie to actually show somebody because it's a really good movie visually, the story is great," he said. "There's a lot of crap out there these days and I think we have a pretty good product."

"Chandler Hall" stars newcomers Jesse Luke Dunn as Jimmy Bravo, Shanna Collins as Adrianna, Zach Graham as Eddie, Tim Chiou as Donnie and Jeremy Shawn as Kliner; and also features veteran actors Sally Kirkland and Michael Bowen.

The Other Venice Film Festival, which had its first event in 2004 and featured 17 works, includes more than 70 films this year, live music, panel discussions, an art show and parties from March 16 through 19.

The festival kicks off March 16 with the "local maverick spotlight" featuring legendary independent filmmaker Roger Corman and a screening of his film "The Masque of the Red Death" starring Vincent Price. The film will be followed by a question-and-answer session with Corman who, since his film career began in the 1950s, has more than 450 feature film and television credits to his name.

For more information, visit [www.chandlerhallmovie.com](http://www.chandlerhallmovie.com) or [www.othervenicefilmfest.com](http://www.othervenicefilmfest.com).

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