

Filmmaker looks to release of first movie: www.tmnews.com

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Not many of my days begin with me finding a filmmaker's business card and a note from my editor to give the man a call.

I noticed that Karl Lentini's business card also carried the words "making dreams come true." But, allowing realism to prevail over fantasy, I somehow figured Lentini wasn't seeking me out for a lead role in a new movie. After all, he probably hadn't been in the audience for that Orange County Players production of "Grease" a few years ago to witness my brilliant delivery of seven lines of dialogue.

As it turned out, I was wise not to get my hopes up; when I rang Lentini's number, he didn't once say, "You oughta be in pictures."

But the 44-year-old son of Bedford residents Dr. Nino and Joan Lentini did fill me on the making of his first feature film, called "Clever's Destiny."

I had plenty of questions for Lentini, ranging from his family's place in Lawrence County to what his life is like in Los Angeles to how his career in the film industry has unfolded. Lentini walked me through the highlights, beginning with how his dad — during the time the family lived in New Castle and long before the move to Bedford in the early 1990s — had taken him to see "Star Wars." At only 8 years old, little Karl didn't really want to go, but Dad made him do it. "It really opened my eyes to the world of movies," Lentini wrote in an email interview.

Lentini's dad had a Super 8 movie camera and the younger Lentini, at the suggestion of a friend, began to make a movie. I don't know how that one turned out, but it put Lentini on a path that would prepare him for all that it would take, many years later, for the making of "Clever's Destiny." Lentini continued to make films in junior high and high school. He went on to Boston University's film school, where he graduated in 1991. Then he moved to Los Angeles. "It's never easy to get a job in the business. ... I worked on film and TV projects here and there, but also worked jobs outside the business. I also worked for free on some productions, as most people do to gain experience and build relationships," he said.

In 2004, he began working his current job as a projectionist at NT Audio in Santa Monica, Calif.

"I established a firm footing in the business and made some decent money," he wrote.

Talk about wearing multiple hats. Lentini is writer, producer, director, actor and composer for "Clever's Destiny."

The plot centers on 18-year-old Amy Cleaver, who had believed her father was dead but learns that he is a veteran of the first Gulf War and is homeless and doesn't have any memory of her. Amy tries to re-connect with him in hopes of reviving his memory.

He added, "It took about a year to write the script. We shot the film in 14 days in the summer of 2008, and it took about five years overall to complete the movie." The film will open Sept. 27 for a one-week run at Laemmle Playhouse in Pasadena, Calif. It will have a DVD release soon after that.

I asked Lentini about the film's military themes.

"I've had relatives over the years who served in the military," he wrote.

"I wanted to serve, but wasn't able to. I found that the relationship between a girl and her father suffering from memory loss was fertile dramatic ground, and would enable me to shoot a film that focused on those two characters."

As for Lentini's own father, he's a retired surgeon who worked at both of Bedford's hospitals. Lentini visits his parents once or twice a year. He said they have been supportive of the movie. "I also gave my parents small roles in the film," he said.

"'Clever's Destiny' deals with the topic of homeless veterans, and if the film can be used to bring awareness to this issue, all the better," Lentini said.

"At heart, though, I think it's about a child's need for parental love and guidance — something I've been lucky enough to have."

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KARL LENTINI



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