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## Madison High grad, an aspiring filmmaker, hopes to find success on West Coast



Chris Allen

By STEVE CHAPLIN  
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Chris Allen couldn't figure out why he was being cursed by the paparazzi as he stood near the red-carpet area of a Hollywood theater preparing to join a long line of actors, producers and show-biz types for the world premiere of "Alien Resurrection."

Then the 26-year-old Madison High School graduate and aspiring filmmaker realized "that I was standing there blocking their view as Winona Ryder was coming into the theater," Allen recalled of his trip to Hollywood and the Los Angeles area in November. "You wouldn't believe the things they were saying to me. You know what they say about the paparazzi? Well, it's true."

But when you have an iron will, an unflinching belief in what you are do-

ing and a personality driven by the kind of projects that create multi-millionaire screen stars, it's easy to shrug off a few expletives hurled by cash-hungry photographers.

"I will say that it was a very eye-opening experience," said Allen, who was on his second trip to Los Angeles this year to shop around a film project he is putting together. "Just being at the movie premiere was an incredible event... seeing people's lives and fortunes being made on telephones all around me."

Allen first went to Los Angeles in August to meet Margaret O'Brien, the Academy Award-winning actress who has become a believer in and supporter of "In My Life," the movie that Allen hopes to someday film in Madison. In classic Hollywood style, Allen met O'Brien through a friend in Louisville who knew a friend in television in California who is close to

both O'Brien and Theresa Saldano, who appeared in "Raging Bull" with Robert De Niro.

He has also met Ed Limato, a top West Coast management executive and agent, through Limato's niece, Rebecca Limato, who happens to live in Madison and works at the same hospital as Allen — King's Daughters' Hospital, where Allen is an office worker.

Even the main supporter of his project on the West Coast, executive producer Jane Anderson, is from Indiana — Muncie.

But as much as it is "who you know," it's just as important for Allen to know that what he is selling is strong enough to stand on its own.

He describes the project as an epic film that spans 60 years of a man's life, although in part through the eyes of another, younger observer.

The central character — the old

man — is brought to a hospital emergency room during a heart attack and dies while being treated. Also being treated is an 18-year-old malcontent drug dealer who has been shot.

It's at this point that the old man's spirit or soul enters the young man's body, and in a matter of a couple of minutes the youth absorbs the man's entire life experiences.

"The kid lives and retains the old man's story and his life," Allen explained. "You know the old saying you hear from old folks so often, 'If you'd walk a mile in my shoes,' well, I thought, OK, let's see what it would be like."

The script has been copyrighted, Allen has become a member of the Writers Guild Association of America and he has produced a five-minute and a 22-minute preview filmed in Madison with the help of innumerable supporters and volunteers.

Residents in and around Madison loaned Allen period clothes, old automobiles and even a rural farmhouse to help in shooting the promotional trailers, and he fully plans to someday shoot the entire film in Southern Indiana.

"We had a private showing of the previews at Hanover College in July and I got just a profound response," he said. "One older couple walked up to me with tears in their eyes and said they would pay for it if they could afford to."

Allen said he first went to Hollywood with hopes of a budget of about \$100,000 for his newest project, but in supporter Anderson he has found someone willing to push the budget towards \$1 million.

"It's not a matter of if it is going to be made now," Allen said. "It's just a matter of when it is going to be made."