

www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/carroll/westminster/ph-ce-westminster-movie-0707-20130702,0,6523270.story

baltimoresun.com

Independent film about The Doors to be shot in Westminster

By Blair Ames, bames@tribune.com

12:20 PM EDT, July 2, 2013

Doug Gardenhour has always had a passion for film, but it was a scene from the movie "Almost Famous" that prompted him to pursue his dream of producing a movie.

In "Almost Famous" music journalist Lester Bangs is seen throwing aside a record from The Doors, saying "Jim Morrison? He's a drunken buffoon posing as a poet."

Gardenhour so strongly disagrees with that line that he is now in the process of filming "Disbelief," an hour-long film based in Westminster that he describes as his dedication to The Doors.

"I've always had a passion for this and now at the age of 44, I'm finally putting my foot down and I am going to pursue that," he said. "I intend to keep working at this and keep driving at this and making sure this project is completed."

Gardenhour began production in Westminster City Park Monday and plans to be film in locations such as the Carroll County Agriculture Center, along Green Street, and Hoffman's Ice Cream throughout July.

It's a small-scale production with Gardenhour traveling through the city with a hand-held video camera, a tripod, and a handful of actors and production assistants.

"I've seen these scenes over and over in my mind, no one should be shooting this but me," he said.

Gardenhour, a native of Smithsburg and now a resident of Frederick, said he chose Westminster because many of the landmarks from which he'll be shooting have not changed in 40 to 50 years.

"Disbelief" centers on 14-year-old Ray Edmunds, of Westminster, who is crushed by the death of his favorite rock star Jim Morrison. He is aided in coping with Morrison's death by Circus magazine editor Danny Newberg, who Edmunds meets in the Westminster City Park.

The film begins July 9, 1971, nearly a week after Morrison had died and concludes October 29, the day Duane Allman, of The Allman Brother Band, dies.

advertisement

JP'S A. BANK

Huge Selection
CLEARANCE

Only \$19.99

Ends July 7 **SHOP NOW ▶**

FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS \$195 +[◇]

Gardenhour, who was only 2 years old when Morrison died, said he sees a little bit of himself in the main character, but the film is intended to relate to people who are now in their 50s and 60s.

"When they watch this film, they'll be able to say, 'Hey, that's my story. That's definitely my story, that's how I reacted to Morrison's death,' " Gardenhour said. "I believe it's marketable, it's very relative to that generation."

It was after seeing *Almost Famous* in 2000 that Gardenhour conceived the idea to make a film dedicated to The Doors' impact, but it wasn't until 2009 that he began writing the script. He finished in 2011.

The film was originally intended to be 2 1/2-hours long, but Gardenhour cut it down because of insurance and budgetary reasons.

His goal is to produce a three-minute trailer, a 10-minute film to enter in Ron Howard's "Project Imagination" and an hour-long film to enter into film festivals early next year.

He hopes to enter the film in five festivals, including the Tribeca Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and Maryland Film Festival.

Over the last nine years, Gardenhour has been collecting and purchasing props for the film, such as a mint condition Orioles batting helmet from the 1970s all the way down to baseball cards and a lamp on Edmunds' desk that fit the movie's time frame.

Gardenhour said he couldn't even estimate how much money or time he has spent preparing for the film.

But he's still looking for additional props and locations to shoot, including a pre-1960s police car and an older home dating to around 1971, preferably with an inground pool.

Gardenhour, a sales official with a storage unit facility in Frederick, is also filming this project around his work schedule.

One of the most difficult aspects, he said, is getting everyone together at the same time.

The film includes six young local actors from the Carroll Arts Center, including Sean Aversa, a 14-year-old Manchester resident who will be playing the role of Ray Edmunds.

Aversa, who acknowledges he didn't know who The Doors were before signing up for the film, has performed in numerous productions at the arts center.

"I've always wanted to be in a film, so I think this is a good step toward becoming a professional actor," he said.

There have not been any large film projects shot in Carroll recently, according to Denise Beaver, deputy director with the Carroll County Department of Economic Development.

Notable films with scenes shot in the county include *Head of State* with Chris Rock and Bernie Mac, and *Red Dragon* with Anthony Hopkins and Edward Norton. Both were shot in 2002.

Gardenhour said he hopes to use music from The Doors in the film, including *Riders on the Storm* and *Love Her Madly*, but he has yet to receive permission.

He said he does has verbal permission to use *I'm Your Captain* by Grand Funk Railroad.

This is Gardenhour's first foray into filmmaking since studying film at Frostburg State University in the early '90s.

"This is my first project, however," he said. "Hopefully, it's not my last project."