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A Story to Tell

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Mayo '02 directs film from the heart

Story by SARAH (ZELLER) JULIAN '07



Mike Mayo '02 directed "For Out of the Heart," a gritty detective drama.

A new film directed by Mike Mayo '02 was a family affair. Mike's father Bill wrote the screenplay, and his brother Bob wrote the musical score. It was filmed with local actors in Peoria, Ill., Mike's hometown, and received its first screening this August in Peoria.

A gritty drama with a twist, *For Out of the Heart* follows a cynical detective's nagging hunch that sinister forces are at play following the apparent heart attack and death of a controversial radio talk-show host. A priest ultimately helps the detective unravel clues leading to the discovery of a murderous plot, but in the process, they discover something far more precious to believe in.

The trio finished filming *For Out of the Heart* in April 2013 and has since spent their free time editing. "We had over 152 hours of digital files, and spent months editing that down to our finished product — one hour and 53 minutes," Mike told *InterBusiness Issues*. "Now that we're nearly done, we're researching ways to share the film — including festivals, self-distribution and following up on various distribution interests already expressed."

The idea for a film was borne out of a screenwriting class Bill took after retiring. The 143-page screenplay he wrote inspired his two sons to bring the story to life, including creating their own film production company, Hone St. Productions. Mike, a marketing communications manager

for Caterpillar, knew his family was right for the job. “I have frequently commented that, with the three of us, my dad, brother and me (a storyteller, an audio guy and a visual artist) we should be able to pull off a decent visual story,” he said.

Working with the film has been challenging but worth it, Mike said. “It’s been a two-plus-year project, filled with the expected and unexpected ups and downs of working hard at something you love,” said Mike. The birth of his daughter and niece, as well as his father’s cancer diagnosis, added to the roller coaster experience.

To those who want to follow in his footsteps, Mike suggests a hands-on approach. “I encourage those interested to gather like-minded friends and family and make a short film,” he said. “There’s a lot of mundane organization that is required to make a film and a lot of pitching ideas, being rejected, phone calls, meetings, insurance, contracts, legal and budgeting. You can get a taste by producing your own project. You’ll have fun, but also get an idea of the amount of work it takes to make a film happen.”

Internships also help; Hone St. Productions hired an IWU student as an intern while filming the movie. Not every internship requires a move to Hollywood, he added. “There’s a lot going on in the Midwest. Do research online for opportunities. Get out in the community, and start asking questions. Work hard — it’s not going to come to you. You have to make it happen.”