

Rejection is sweet

After film school turned him down, Jack

Vero left for the Hollywood Hills by David Ort



Jack Vero made his first film after being rejected from film school

Jack Vero thinks his first film, *Cherries and Clover*, might have been about as unorthodox as movie productions can get.

The writer-director, who graduated from St. Theresa of Lisieux Catholic High School in Richmond Hill, started writing the script for the film when he was 17. The teen rom com is now available on Amazon for online streaming, and is about to be released on iTunes,

By the time shooting began, he could only just legally buy alcohol — with a crew whose median age barely qualified for a driver's licence.

He notes that many movies are

“Don't wait for people to give you permission to make a film.”

made on a shoestring budget, but thinks the lack of experience and unique challenges — everyone has a crush on each other and no one can drive — that come with an all-adolescent cast and crew are greater hurdles.

In Grade 11, when he caught himself doodling for hours instead of doing calculus homework, Vero started to realize that medicine, his original career path, might not be the right one for him. He changed tack and applied to film school. Once he'd decided that filmmaking was his passion, he was undeterred when these schools rejected his application.

Vero was on the verge of graduating from high school, knew what he wanted to do but didn't have a clear path to that goal through school.

REPORT CARD

STUDENT: Jack Vero

GRADUATED: St. Theresa of Lisieux Catholic High School, 2007

BEST SUBJECT: English

WORST SUBJECT: Religious Studies

CURRENT JOB: Writer-Director, Founder of Pilot Pig Productions

He had the script for *Cherries and Clover*, which questions whether childhood friends can become lovers, and decided he needed to go ahead and make it into a movie.

As a high school student, he was most inspired by English teachers who introduced him to writing, and instead of film school, he studied writing at York University.

Despite an excellent GPA, he left after his second year, and moved to Santa Monica a year later to pursue filmmaking full-time.

His next project, an as-yet-unnamed film, whose working titles are both *Project 2* and *The Millennials*, is described on his website (jackvero.com) as a “utopian futurist manifesto.”

Vero lets on that it will share some similarities with *The Matrix* but with mind uploading, and it will focus on how his generation might find immortality through technology.

Vero thinks that these more direct distribution channels are the key for other young directors who want to launch their careers.

On top of his filmmaking, Vero has a second career as an entrepreneur. He is involved with a robotics startup, ParkingSpot Saver.com, that will market a remote-controlled pop-up “reserved” sign to block illegal parking in assigned parking spots.

From his perspective, the biggest change in the film industry is how inexpensive technology, freely available information and easily accessible distribution channels have created opportunity for new filmmakers.

In fact, the piece of advice that he heard most often and repeats himself is, “Don't wait for people to give you permission to make a film. Just go ahead and do it.”