



May 5, 1977

18-yr.-old actor Paul turns to production side of business

By: Ron Pennington

Eighteen-year-old Steven Paul, after 10 years as a stage and film actor, is now turning to the production end of the business and has two projects he is currently preparing with his co-producer Sam Shaw. In addition, Paul has also completed the James Komack TV pilot of "Whatever Happened to Dobie Gillis?" and is waiting to see if this show will go to series.

Paul's first film project will be "Memories," which is based on a story by his father, Hank Paul, about his youth in the Bronx during the '40s. The idea germinated when Paul went back to New York with his parents to attend the 20th reunion of his father's football team.

"My father was writing a book about his experiences," Paul said, "but I videotaped the reunion and talked him into letting me do it as a film." Out of this, Paul produced and directed a half-hour "pilot" titled "Memories Are Not Enough," which he said is about "how a boy got the most beautiful girl in the neighborhood with the help of his friends. Then, when he goes back years later, he finds his roots are no longer there and it's like a part of his life is gone."

He said he had several offers to expand this into a feature film and that there was also interest in doing it as a TV series. But Paul finally decided to develop it independently, co-producing with Sam Shaw, because he also wanted to direct the film.

Paul said he and Shaw have secured independent financing for the film, which will have a budget of less than \$1 million, and that they hope to begin production this summer, depending on the "Dobie Gillis" schedule. He added that he would like to have Ted Allan or I.A.L. Diamond to do the script.

Paul has also acquired the film rights to Kurt Vonnegut's new novel "Slapstick," which he is also preparing to co-produce with Shaw. Paul will not direct this, however, noting that it will be a big-budget project which will probably be made in conjunction with a major studio.

Paul originally starred in both the stage and film versions of Vonnegut's "Happy Birthday, Wanda June," and he said at that time the writer promised to create a show for the young actor.

"But he never did," Paul laughed. "Then, when I was looking for something for Susannah York (who also starred in "Wanda June") last summer I was talking to Kurt and he said I could do worse than picking up his latest book, which was scheduled to be published that fall. I read the book and loved it. So I had story boards drawn up on what I wanted to do with it. Kurt was impressed and let me have the rights. Susannah has read the book and loves it and I would also like to get Alan Arkin if he's available. But this will all depend on timing and the final screenplay. Kurt wants to work on the script, but he feels we also need somebody with a fresh point of view who knows how to structure a screenplay."

In addition, Paul and Shaw are also developing a third project, in which Paul would costar with York. They now have a treatment about which they are talking to various writers, he said, adding that Shaw may direct this one.