



Harrison Hahne-Lum, a FilmAcademy360 student whose film was accepted to the Garden State Film Festival, is shown with Shawn Kavanaugh, the student camera operator, and supervising staff member Alyssa Currey.

Student's Film Will Be Shown At Garden State Film Festival

A film by Harrison Hahne-Lum, a student at FilmAcademy360 in Livingston, was accepted to the 2023 Garden State Film Festival, and will be shown on Sunday, March 26, at the Berkeley Kingsley Ballroom in Asbury Park.

This is the first film festival Harrison has entered. "I was surprised and honored that my film was chosen," he said.

Harrison's four-minute film, "What a Trap," is a comedy/horror spoof about a young man trapped by an evil sock puppet who will need to guess a riddle to escape. It is a parody of his favorite movie, "Saw."

"Like 'Saw' met 'Sesame Street,'" he explained.

Harrison brainstormed ways of doing the film with his classmates in FilmAcademy360. The students made valuable suggestions about the story, the puppets, and the title, he said.

"In class, I learned how to turn my story into a screenplay, to act, to create a set, learn the process of filming, and using the editing program," he said.

Staff helped edit and mold the script, and Harrison edited the video on professional software, adding special effects, music, and credits.

FilmAcademy360 provides class-

room studies and studio experiences for individuals age 14 and up with autism and related disabilities, and for community members. It meets after school and on Saturdays.

Filming, which Harrison did with a student crew, took only a couple of hours. "Editing took the longest because I wasn't familiar with Premier Pro at the time," Harrison said. "Writing also took awhile because I

kept inserting jokes and stuff."

Harrison plays both characters, Devin and Doggo Sock, because he was, at the time, new to the class and shy about asking anyone if they wanted to be in it. "Now I know the people much better," he said. He also made the puppet.

"We had no budget, and Mr. DiLanni gave me a sock, and I thought a sock puppet was a cute idea." "Mr. DiLanni" is David DiLanni, founder and director of the FilmAcademy360.

"We helped Harrison create a profile on Film Freeway, a portal for filmmakers to submit to multiple film festivals," said DiLanni. "Harrison was overjoyed by his acceptance. It has been a very gratifying experience."

Harrison's film even features a professional voice actor. Jim Conroy, an actor and voiceover artist who has a son in FilmAcademy360, gave a presentation to the students. Harrison mustered the courage to ask Conroy if he would voice a line in his film.

"He agreed to voice the plush tiger and I was thrilled!" he said.

Harrison is 18 years old and a senior at Newmark High School, where he spends part of the day studying digital design. He has been fascinated with art, animation and film since he was a young child. In junior high school he started watching YouTube how-to videos and learning animation and aspects of film-making. "I joined the Academy to learn more about the process of telling a story and putting it into film," he said.

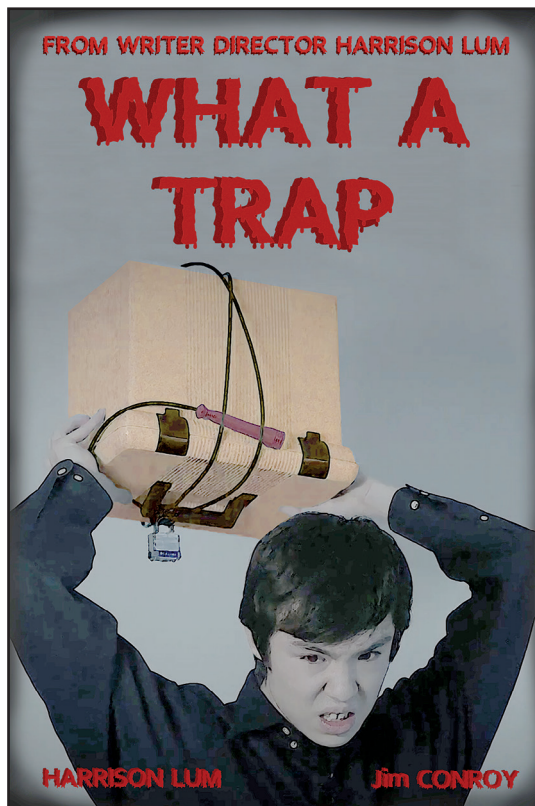
In 2020, he took fifth place in digital voice production in an FBLA event. Last summer, he attended a teen film program at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and won the award for best graphic design. "All the accomplishments I made prove I can succeed and compete with anyone," he said. "FilmAcademy helps people with autism learn about all aspects of film-making." He plans to go to college to major in film.

Harrison is now working on a movie about a swan trying to find love. "It's taking a while, because it's origami stop motion," he said.

His other interests include art and building with LEGOs and scale models, and he invites readers to view his Instagram page, @hazardwoodofficial.

"What a Trap" will soon be available to view on the FilmAcademy's YouTube channel, and likely in its film festival in September.

"I want to make a bunch of action films," Harrison said. "I'll never forget Mr. DiLanni and all the people here."



Shown in character in "What a Trap" is Harrison Hahne-Lum, a FilmAcademy360 student. Harrison created the poster for his film, which was accepted to the Garden State Film Festival. Also named on the poster was voiceover actor Jim Conroy.