

# ‘The Corner’ marks turning point for Quincy’s McClain brothers, now screenwriting duo, with film debut on Sunday

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ILLINOIS LOCAL HAPPENINGS MUDDY RIVER VIBE NOTEWORTHY QUINCY TOP STORIES



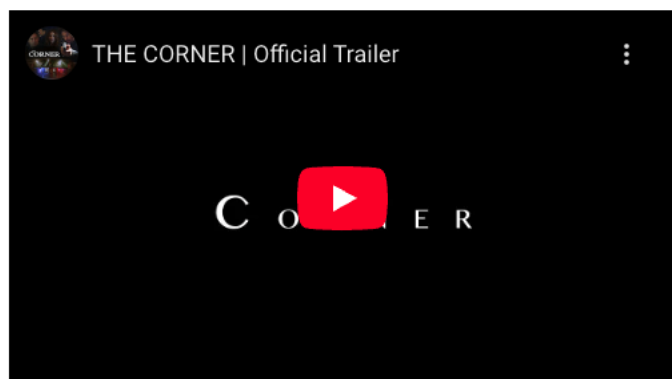
Dan, left, and Patrick McClain at the American Film Convention in Los Angeles. | Photo courtesy of The Octopi Group

QUINCY — It’s been nearly 35 years since Dan McClain was removed from the movie theater of the Quincy Town Center (known then as the Quincy Mall) for sneaking into a showing of the R-rated film “Pretty Woman” at age 11.

He’ll make a triumphant return to the same theater in less than a week — this time with full-fledged parental permission and an entire cast and crew at his side — for the premier of his own movie, “The Corner.”

The film marks the debut of Brothers McClain, the screenwriting duo made up of real-life brothers and Quincy natives Dan and Patrick McClain. It’s also the first release from [The Octopi Group](#), a media production company founded by “The Corner” director Zachary Charles Raderstorf.

After years of hobby writing and several production hiccups, the film’s release serves as a testament to Dan, Patrick and Raderstorf’s creative resilience and a preview of what’s to come.



## A film 15 years in the making

“The Corner” follows Trey Connors ([Guy Nardulli](#)), a prodigal son who returns home to Chicago to run the family bar after the passing of his father. There, he’s reunited with Gail Mitchell ([Brittany Underwood](#)), an old love interest and owner of the funeral home across the street. The story takes a darker turn, however, when a young family friend goes missing.

Inspiration for the film first hit Patrick about 15 years ago while on a walk to the Bird’s Nest, a neighborhood bar across the street from a funeral home at the corner of North Southport Avenue and West Altgeld Street, rumored to have the best wings in all of Chicago.

The layered juxtaposition of life and death intrigued him, but the story wouldn’t resurface until early 2022, when Patrick and Dan’s collaboration on the script brought it together — and the addition of Raderstorf to the mix brought it to life.



*Behind-the-scenes shots from the filming of "The Corner" in October 2022. | Photos courtesy of The Octopi Group*

The group secured enough funding for the project by spring. A few months later, actors were flown into Chicago from Los Angeles to film. Production wrapped 17 days later — two days less than they'd planned, thanks to a COVID-19 outbreak on set.

The loss of two days meant the loss of significant pieces of the story's original plot, which complicated the editing process. The [actor's strike](#) brought even more setbacks throughout post-production.

The film was finally ready for its first screening by October 2024, and a producer premier was held at Soho House Chicago.

"As always in life, nothing comes quickly," Raderstorf said. "This has been quite the slow burn over time."



*From left: Patrick and Dan McClain, cast members Guy Nardulli and Danny Pardo and production manager Grace Maren Ryan, with director Zachary Charles Raderstorf crouching in front. | Photo courtesy of The Octopi Group*



# ‘You’ve got to quit talking about it and do it’

Dan and Patrick were the kind of kids who would disappear during family gatherings, only to resurface an hour later with sparkling eyes, beaming grins and the familiarly triumphant announcement of, “We have something to show you.” (Code for: “We just whipped up an entire play in the basement, and though you may think this is child’s play, it’s very serious business.”)

Many kids are performers in that way, but few manage to dive deeper into the sacred tradition of storytelling as they grow up. With each bedtime story, strange dream and spark of inspiration that drifted down Hampshire Street, Patrick and Dan moved closer and closer to their pens.

Like many artists, the drive to create sped up during the long, “angst-filled” stretch of adolescence, bringing them their first waves of storylines and poetry. They eventually both graduated from Quincy Notre Dame and left home for college — older brother Patrick first, then Dan a few years later — earning their degrees in English.



*Patrick (left) and Dan McClain played sports at and graduated from Quincy Notre Dame before both going on to study English in college.* | Photos courtesy of The Octopi Group

They followed their own paths in the years that followed to Iowa, Washington, South Carolina, Hawaii, Alaska and even Spain before settling in Colorado and the Chicago area. They entered into the mortgage industry, got married and had kids, but their passion for writing remained constant, if only in their free time.

“When you’re young, you think you’re a writer, but then you realize you’re not writing anything,” Patrick said. “But then you learn, finally, that you’ve got to quit talking about it and do it.”

After crossing off short stories, poems and novels from the to-do list every writer has, they tried their hand at writing for the screen. Patrick first pitched an idea for a script to Dan in 2015 in hopes of collaborating, but, admittedly, Dan “so very rudely” didn’t take him up on it for several years.

It wasn’t until 2020 that Dan finally showed an interest. By the end of a weekend writing session, they had the first draft of their first script for a film currently in the works.

“I don’t think (writing together) would’ve worked if we would’ve done it 20 years ago ... I don’t think we would have been as open-minded to working with somebody else or somebody’s suggestions,” Dan said. “I think now, at a more mature age, we’re more patient with each other.”

“Allegedly mature,” Patrick added with a grin.



*Patrick (left) and Dan McClain at the Bird's Nest, the Chicago bar that initially inspired the story for the duo's screenwriting debut film "The Corner" roughly 15 years ago. The bar is owned by one of Patrick's friends and is a couple of blocks away from DePaul University. | Photo courtesy of The Octopi Group*

Patrick first met Raderstorf through work — “in the equally exciting realm of mortgages,” he said — roughly a decade ago. Discussions about their profession over post-work cocktails eventually evolved into ones about writing and movies. Several years later, they decided to go for it.

Raderstorf said he appreciated the way the brothers’ minds worked and the connection they had, not only on the types of movies they liked to watch but also on the types of movies they hoped to create in collaboration with one another. The brothers valued Raderstorf’s wide-ranging creative skillset, but it was his “vision to build” that got things off the ground.

“(Raderstorf) didn’t want to just create one movie. The idea is to create a studio where we could go from inception to production to distribution, and now he’s created that with The Octopi Group,” Patrick said. “(‘The Corner’) was kind of our first foundational stone to build on, and now we’re ready to go from there. We’re excited about it.”

## Two other films in the works for Quincy

The Quincy premiere of the film is, of course, a nod to the brothers’ hometown pride. It also reflects an interest in future investments in the community.

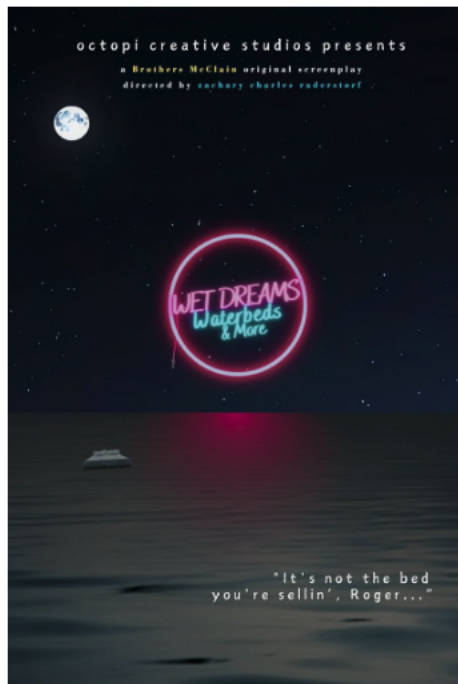
“There are so many stories to tell in that town,” Dan said. “There are endless opportunities there.”

Quincy’s history itself would be enough to keep the group busy, but the variation in scenery allows plenty of opportunities for period dramas, coming-of-age stories and horror flicks; well-preserved 19th-century homes and log cabins, Gothic-style schools and churches and the richly textured backdrops of the Mississippi River, Siloam Springs State Park and old limestone mines are all within a short drive of one another.

“It really provides massive value production-wise to anything that we shoot down there (because of the) grandeur and the difference in everything,” Raderstorf said.

The opportunity to stimulate the city’s economy, spotlight its charm and collaborate with its citizens who already have experience in the arts only added to the appeal.

“(Quincy is) an interesting place, and I love that we’re from there,” Dan said. “There’s a lot of really talented people in Quincy.”



*Teaser poster for "Wet Dreams, Waterbeds & More"| Photo courtesy of The Octopi Group*

At least two other projects are in the works that the group hopes to shoot in town, potentially as soon as late August. "Wet Dreams, Waterbeds & More" is a Coen Brothers-esque throwback thriller set at the height of the waterbed craze in the 1980s. "The Armory" is a psychological thriller set primarily inside [the Gothic-style building of the same name](#) at 416 Jersey.

"We feel very welcome here — personally, of course, but also artistically. I feel like we can really build on that together with our hometown, or in Zach's case, the town he's enamored with just from being there a handful of times already," Patrick said. "That relationship with the community is something that we look to grow together, so we're very excited."

*"The Corner" will be shown at 2 and 7 p.m. on June 22 at VIP Cinemas 3. [Tickets are available for purchase on the theater's website.](#)*