

Joseph Coaler

Steve Mancini and Geoff Hoff met while working on the episodic stage play, Tony Mack's Swingin' L.A., in March, 1998. They were both called in as writers by its creator, Dean Simone, and were both later tapped to perform. Tony Mack was a satirical variety show about a bunch of guys trying desperately to be the Rat Pack and failing miserably. Steve played Joe, the stage manager, who was described as either the world's calmest man, an axe murderer, or both. Geoff played Tommy Sullivan, an international crooner, star of stage, screen and TV, who took great pride in ruffling the boys' feathers. Geoff eventually became the director of the show. The show won best Cabaret in LA in Los Angeles Magazine in 1999 and was chosen comedy pick of the week by the L.A. Weekly.

Steve wrote a sketch for Geoff's character and Dean suggested he talk to Geoff about it. It was a bit about Tommy dying, which should have clued Geoff in to Steve's true feelings. Nonetheless, while polishing the bit and turning it into an entire episode, they decided they worked well together and wrote bits for several more episodes and at least two other entire episodes. When the producers decided to pitch the show to television, they collaborated on the pilot, wrote the bible document and one entire episode for it. They also wrote several spec scripts for sitcoms and a screenplay or two.

After banging their heads against the wall trying to get anyone in the industry to read their work, they decided to take it directly to the public and formed the company Joseph Coaler Productions (named after the character Steve played in Tony Mack and a fairly slimy character in one of Geoff's novels, a connection Geoff still hasn't forgiven Steve for...) and posted the first installment of Weeping Willow on January 1, 2001. "We have no one but ourselves to answer to," Hoff says, to which Mancini replies, "I'm sorry, what? I was watching the bald man with the headphones." In order to support their writing habit, they started another business, Somebody Good, Inc., in July, 2001, a legal secretary referral service.

Little by little, Weeping Willow gained in popularity, partly due to Steve and Geoff's witty banter with each other, and the intriguing story of the main character, Lee Harris. Weeping Willow is different from most on-line serials since it does not have the "soap-opera" feel that so many do, and no other has the hilarious interjections from its writers. Weeping Willow can be found at their web site JosephCoaler.com. They have a very loyal fan base that is growing in size daily. "We're the Weeping Willow of on-line satirical serials," Mancini insists.

They continue to promote Weeping Willow, and are working on other writing and production projects. "Steve keeps coming up with ideas," Hoff says. "I hate that about him."

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