

LI BUSINESS

THE SCOOP

JAMES BERNSTEIN



Melville lawyer Michael J. Ricigliano Jr. has written a film, "Lily of the Feast," which will be screened here in July.

Law by day, movies by night

FILM

Michael J. Ricigliano Jr. was practicing land use and zoning law at the firm co-founded 40 years ago by his father, Michael Sr. But about four years ago Margotta & Ricigliano LLP of Melville merged with another firm, Lewis Johns Avallone Aviles, also of Melville.

"They took over our entire real estate practice," Michael Jr. said. "That left me with a lot more time. I was driving my wife crazy."

One day about two years ago, he said, he decided he wanted to write a screenplay. The thing was, Ricigliano said, "I was never really good at English in school."

He went out and bought a book on screenwriting. Now here's the part where would-be screenwriters will be jealous: The screenplay Ricigliano, 40, the lifelong law-

yer, wrote, "Lily of the Feast," was made into a movie, which will be shown July 10 at the Long Island International Film Expo at Bellmore Movies.

The film, set in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in 1973, is the story of a bookie-turned-banker who finds himself in the midst of a mobster's bid for power.

"The Soprano's" actor Federico Castelluccio plays the bookie/banker. Paul Sorvino co-stars.

Ricigliano wrote another script, "Redemption," about a young filmmaker. Former Paramount Pictures president Martin Cohen has bought the rights.

"I'm happily surprised," said Ricigliano, who does not plan to give up his day job — not just yet anyway.

"I do most of this now when the kids go to bed" at 7 p.m., he said. "I have a law practice. I have a family."

PHOTO BY DANIELLE FINKELSTEIN