

Marlboro native follows career path to ‘Seinfeld,’ ‘The Office’

By **PETER ELACQUA**
Staff Writer

Marlboro native David Rogers has worked on several critically acclaimed shows during his career in the television industry. For Rogers, it was a career that started in his hometown when he made a film about his favorite superhero.

During a 23-year career in Los Angeles, Rogers has worked as an assistant editor on “Seinfeld,” as an editor, co-executive producer and director on “The Office” and he is currently an editor and co-executive producer on “The Mindy Project.”

Rogers directed nine episodes of “The Office” during the show’s fifth season. During his stint with the comedy that starred Steve Carell, Rogers won Emmy awards in 2007 and 2013 for “Outstanding Single Camera Picture Editing for a Comedy Series.”

Rogers is an avid fan of Superman and said the legendary superhero was a major influence on him as a child. “I saw the (1978) movie ‘Superman’ and thought, ‘somebody put this together,’” Rogers said during a recent visit to Marlboro. “Someone made this. And that is when I asked what a director was. So I started getting interested in filmmaking and the behind-the-scenes (tasks). How do you do this? I remember as a child being blown away by movies and to this day ‘Superman’ is my favorite movie.”

When Rogers was 16, he shot a film titled “Superman in Marlboro,” which he wrote, directed and produced, and in which he starred. It took the cast and crew six months to shoot what became a 15-minute film and for which his mother, Ann, designed the costumes.

“I started videotaping bar mitzvahs when I was 15 and that was when I was able to get my hands on equipment,” Rogers said. “I shot (‘Superman in Marlboro’) at the high school, I cast friends from the neighborhood. I cast friends from high school who I thought would be good.”

Rogers said his office contains a shrine to the movie “Superman,” complete with photographs, props and scripts from the film.

He said his father, Nat, was a major influence in his career as an editor.

“My father was an editor and he did sports,” Rogers said. “He worked on ‘Monday Night Football,’ he would edit the halftime packages, all the highlights, and the Olympics and things like that. He also worked on soap operas. I never knew exactly what he did, but I went to work with him and he helped me edit ‘Superman in Marlboro.’”

“Seeing what he did, I think that affected what I thought about editing. I loved directing, of all the things to do I would say it is up there as my favorite. But editing, I think it’s equal. I would say I love them both, but with editing ... you get to fix things, you get to make things better,” he said.

Rogers graduated from Ithaca College with a bachelor’s degree in cinema and photography. He interned in Los Angeles the summer before his senior year, working at a post-production facility.

After graduating from Ithaca, Rogers returned to Marlboro and filmed weddings and bar mitzvahs for a year. He moved to Los Angeles and worked as a production assistant and a runner. He worked on educational videos, independent television projects and music videos.

He was eventually contacted by a fellow Ithaca College



Marlboro native David Rogers has enjoyed success in a career that has seen him work in different capacities on popular television shows such as “Seinfeld,” “The Office” and “The Mindy Project.”

graduate and was offered a job as a production assistant on “Seinfeld.”

Rogers said technology has advanced by leaps and bounds from the time he began making and editing films to today. From equipment that left some work grainy and dull, technology has reached a level where “you can shoot a high-definition movie on your phone and edit it on your phone or laptop,” he said.


Rogers offered the following advice to aspiring filmmakers and editors.

“Work hard, have a good attitude,” he said. “You want your producers to want to work with you. Know your software ... learn it, know it, you have to be good at it and you have to keep up with the technology. You have to have this skill set. There are other things you will learn along the way, but basically learn the technology, learn the software, learn your craft.”

“You have to be patient and persistent. You have to get out there, you have to make contacts, make cold calls, get your resume, sign up with the Motion Picture Editors Guild, get on the roster, talk to anybody you know who is in the industry.”

“When you get on a job, you have to network and you will meet other assistant editors and editors. It becomes about networking and who you trust. ... I usually say that if a director does a bad job, an editor can make a show good,” Rogers said. “If a director does a good job, we can make it great. If a director does a great job, we can have something amazing.”


“I would love to come back and live in New Jersey,” he said. “I always come back when I have a hiatus. I would love to do work in New York. All the areas, Red Bank, Rumson, Navesink, the beaches, Colts Neck, Manalapan, Freehold, I love it all. I love this whole area. I have been [in Los Angeles] for 23 years, more than half my life, and I love it out there, but I love it here.”



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