

STREET SCENE

As seen on TV: Local actors follow their dreams



STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

When it comes to the entertainment industry, Detroit has come a long way. Still light years from the industry forefront — namely New York and Hollywood — the Motor City has its way of weaving in and out of the spotlight, reminding the world that there's more to Michigan than just automobiles.

Last week two Michigan actors marked breakthrough performances in their careers. One has made the move to California; the other has stayed closely tied to his Michigan roots.

Hollywood or bust

Rich Hutchman was only 5 years old when he and his family moved to Livonia from Ireland. By age 10 he was delivering the *Livonia Observer*. He attended Franklin High School and later Kalamazoo College. "I have the warmest feelings for Livonia, there's no doubt about it," he said.

All the while Hutchman dreamed of becoming an actor. He moved to Hollywood only eight months ago and landed a

guest-starring appearance on "Chicago Hope," which aired Thursday, Sept. 23. Hutchman played Roy, a character whose son was taken to the hospital because of a cleft pallet. Doctors, played by Lauren Holly and Barbara Hershey, discover the boy also has a heart condition. Both ailments must be operated on — at the same time.

Of his first big television part, Hutchman said it was a great experience. "All of the actors were really professional and nice," he said, adding that Holly and Hershey were particularly wonderful to work with. He called Hershey "such a major star."

Having lived in Chicago for seven years prior to moving to the West coast, Hutchman had a unique understanding of his character. "I have more of a feeling for the actor in Chicago," said Hutchman. "He's a real, regular guy."

As he's continued to pursue his career, Hutchman said his family has been very supportive. "My dad would always say, 'You only get to live once. Go for your dream.' And he is.

Wanting it all

It's almost as if Ed Nahhat leads two separate lives. By day

he works as a general practice litigator. On his own time, the Royal Oak resident writes and acts in plays, films, industrial videos and commercials.

On Saturday afternoon, Sept. 26, cable audiences around the country had a first chance to tune into the Lifetime network and catch him in action, Nahhat starred in a supporting role in the film "All of It," which was filmed in the Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills area in October 1997. The movie's writer, director and co-producer is former Bloomfield Hills resident Jody Podolsky. Darron Gold, also from Bloomfield Hills, assisted in producing, casting, and hired a crew for "All of It."

Nahhat auditioned for a small role in the film, a restaurant manager, but the Podolsky and Gold had a "bigger part in mind" for him. One week later, he was on the set as a supporting cast member, on a project starring Academy Award nominee Lesley Ann Warren. Nahhat can't help but break a smile still thinking about it. He was most impressed with the way Podolsky approached him for the role.

"She treated me like a professional, even though I was only a local actor," he said.

The film deals with the tense relationship between a mother

and daughter who lead different lives. It centers around Amy Holbeck (Alanna Urbach), a 25-year-old woman living in New York City who returns to the Oakland County suburbs to spend Yom Kippur with her family.

"It's a timeless story," said Nahhat. "Well written and honest. He plays the perfect son-in-law married to the other daughter. I really enjoyed playing a smart Alec."

For Michigan natives, certain sites in the film will look familiar: the Franklin Cider Mill, Congregation Shaarey Zedek and Long Lake Market. There are shots taken from downtown Birmingham, Southfield and the director's Bloomfield Hills home in the film. "You'll be able to see that it's local," said Nahhat, who began acting in church plays and at Kimball High School, Royal Oak. After getting a bachelor's degree in fine arts and honing his skills at such places as the Michigan Repertory Theatre and The Attic Theater, Nahhat enrolled in law school at Wayne State University.

While law and acting may seem quite opposite as careers go, Nahhat drew parallels between them. In law, he said, you have to "believe in your client," have "experience," and "have confidence in the presenta-



Ed Nahhat

tion of ideas and emotions to a judge or jury." Those same skills benefit him as an actor before an audience.

Chances are Nahhat won't be packing up and moving to Cali-

fornia to become a star; he's got work to do in the Metro area. More importantly, he said, his family still lives here. "My heart is sort of in this area," said Nahhat. He admires people like actor Jeff Daniels who stay true to their Michigan roots. "He's a big supporter of local talent, local artists," said Nahhat of Daniels. "I admire that kind of loyalty to hometown."

So he strikes a balance between practicing law and maintaining a creative outlet in television, theater, and now film. Look for "All of It" to be shown again on Lifetime.

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Mystery from page E6

who started Power Move Productions in 1995 to gain more control over his own musical career.

"We built up a small pre-production studio, released a single and a full-length album on The 10, now we're promoting concerts. Now we're a full-fledged entertainment company. Hopefully we'll be making some noise."

The 10 recently released "Heat," an album carrying a strong street buzz. Sims described The 10 as having a "hard-core street sound."

"The way it's presented, it's something everyone can relate to," said Sims, who's been in the music business for 15 years. He said he loves the way hip hop has crossed over to include other genres, like rock and roll, and other cultures.

"I have a love of music that came across time," said Sims. "No matter what happens, hip hop is like my culture, a way of life. It's not anything I can think about changing. It's not even a conscious effort."

What better way to make a living than by incorporating something you love. Sims sees the potential in creating and performing hip hop in Detroit. Just talking to people in the area, or on his Web site, he can tell, "how huge this is."

"I feel like I have something to do with that," he said. "I want to continue to make it grow."

The Second Annual Microphone Mystery Tour will be held 9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 2, at Center Stage, 39940 Ford Road in Canton. Call (313) 438-0743 for information.

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