

a Working-class actor

Jersey City actor returns to hit drama 'Law and Order,' p. 5

Current

LIFE • LEISURE • LISTINGS www.hudsoncurrent.com Volume 18, No. 28 • November 13 - 19, 2008

Photo by: Oded Shoshan.

Plus: Reporter on the road, p. 3; theatre production 'Bad Seed', p. 4; and letters on the back page.

a Working-class actor



HOW YOU DOIN'? – Jersey City actor George Pogatsia is funding his new screenplay, “The Pizza Tapes,” and has pledged participation from well known actors including former Sopranos star Vincent Pastore. For more information visit: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1784765/>. Photo by: Oded Shoshan.

By Sean Allocca
Current staff writer

As a New York City native with big screen dreams, Jersey City resident George Pogatsia found a perfect fit playing a corrupt court officer on season 15 of the hit crime drama *Law and Order*.

With over 20 independent films to his name, Pogatsia returned to *Law and Order* on Nov. 5 in the season 19 premiere, “Rumble.”

Law and Order is now the longest-running crime drama and the second-longest running TV drama in TV history. According to Pogatsia, the Nov. 5 episode brought in close to 8 million viewers.

Critics say *Law and Order*'s success is partly due to the native New York actors and locations used to create an authentic New Yorker attitude.

“It was really exciting shooting the episode,” Pogatsia said. “It was a challenge for the director too, who had a huge cast – I know the make-up people had a lot of work to do.”

According to Pogatsia, the episode was slated to be the third in the new season that was originally scheduled to begin in January. But with recent success, TV executives decided to push up the season and chose “Rumble” as the season premiere.

“We’ve had really great feedback,” Pogatsia said about the episode.

Playing a tough-guy construction worker, Pogatsia

Jersey City actor returns to hit crime drama ‘Law and Order’

worked on the streets of the financial district, at *Law and Order*'s studio at Chelsea Piers, and at New York Downtown Hospital.

“People do stop and look,” Pogatsia said. “I had imagined myself being [on set as a kid], and now it feels really rewarding.”

All in the family

Pogatsia first became interested in acting through his cousin Gregory Rozakis, who was nominated for a Golden Globe for his work in the 1963 movie, “America America.”

“I grew up looking up to him,” Pogatsia said, “and I started to become interested in the craft.”

But, it wasn't until the movie “Lords of Flatbush” was shot on the corner of his childhood home in Brooklyn that Pogatsia knew he wanted to pursue a career in acting.

“[The episode] was a challenge for the director too, who had a huge cast – I know the make-up people had a lot of work to do.”
– George Pogatsia

“My mother still tells the story to this day,” Pogatsia said. “She tried dragging me inside the house, but I wouldn't budge.”

The young actor watched the lights and cameras for hours.

“It's funny, anytime I see a set in New York or Jersey,” Pogatsia said, “I always stop and ask – I'm always interested.”

After working odd jobs, Pogatsia decided to study acting.

“I wanted to jump right in and hone my craft,” Pogatsia said, “and continue to work and learn, and

home town appeal

ACTOR from page 5

get better day by day." To further his acting, Pogatsia decided to work with the talented acting coach Shelia Gray.

Sheila has worked with numerous actors including Robert DeNiro and Julianne Nicholson. After spending years learning from Gray, Pogatsia landed a part as a corrupt court officer in season 15 of *Law and Order*.

Since then, Pogatsia has appeared in a co-starring role on the final season of the *Sopranos* in Christopher Moltisante's film *Cleaver*, and was highlighted on a Hollywood Squares New York edition for up-and-coming actors.

Brooklyn roots

Now, Pogatsia is working on funding for his new comedic screenplay, "The

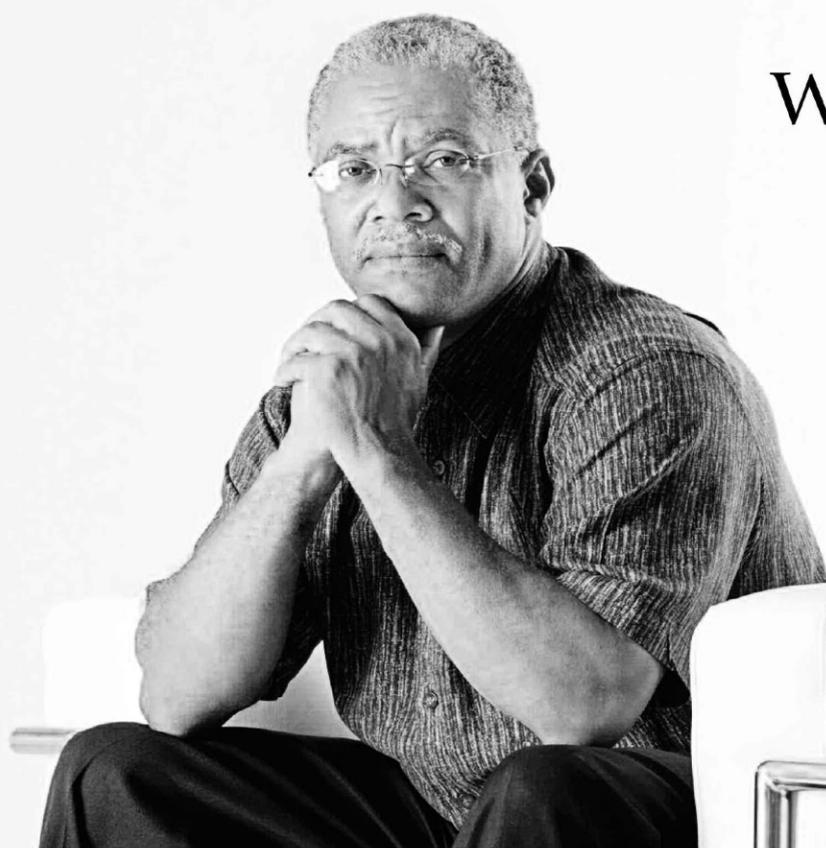
Pizza Tapes," documenting the lives of Italian-American pizzeria owners in Brooklyn. With pledged participation from Frank Vincent and Vincent Pastore of the *Sopranos*, the movie mocks pre-conceptions of Italian-American life. Pogatsia even secured participation from the well-known actor/model Tyson Beckford.

In addition to "The Pizza Tapes," Pogatsia is also looking to work on Martin Scorsese's HBO project "Boardwalk Empire" documenting the underworkings of Atlantic City's rise and fall.

For more information about George Pogatsia and "The Pizza Tapes," visit: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1784765/>. □



THE SMALL SCREEN – Jersey City actor George Pogatsia returned to the hit drama series *Law and Order* on Nov. 5. For more information please visit: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1784765/>.



When a surgeon's skill
meets Robotic
precision ...
the results are
astonishing.

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
the leader in Robotic Surgery.

We do it better, and can prove it.

Robotic surgery is making history here at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. As the first comprehensive robotics facility on the East Coast, we offer our patients a level of surgical accuracy that was never before possible.

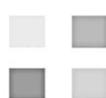
With computer-enhanced technology and robotic precision, our surgeons are able to remove a cancerous prostate through a dime-size incision. Patients can return home within 24 hours with nothing more than a couple of small bandages. It's all the control, range of motion, and 3-D visualization of traditional "open" surgery—but with significantly less pain, scarring, and recovery time. So you can get back to the things you enjoy a whole lot sooner.

At Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, we perform more robotic surgeries in more specialties than any other hospital in the New Jersey, with most complicated patients being referred to NBI for obesity and multiple prior surgeries.

Pioneers in Robotic Surgery

- ❖ First in NJ to use athermal nerve sparing for earlier return of potency
- ❖ First to use reconstructive methods for earlier return of continence
- ❖ First to repair hernias robotically
- ❖ The first davinci S on the east coast
- ❖ One of the first davinci S training centers in the world - providing instruction and training for surgeons nationally and internationally

To learn more or to see if you qualify as a candidate, please call 1.800.THE.BETH or visit us at www.thebethrobot.com.



**SAINT BARNABAS
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center



1.888.SBHS.123 www.saintbarnabas.com