

Dan Griffin

Producer, Writer, Actor, Author, Musician

Born in Connecticut, USA of Irish decent, the oldest of five children, he quickly learned to juggle his responsibilities and his very creative/artistic side. Back in first grade, Griffin used to create and draw stories for many of the children on the playground, and probably during class too a bit! He grew up very involved in the arts, singing on stage since he was 6 years old.

By the time Griffin was 12 years old, he was singing with the Golden Chordsmen, a nationally-renowned Barbershop Singing Chorus, and had competed in both the state and Western New England competitions. Griffin excelled at many things, including various sports (soccer, gymnastics and Irish step-dancing) and academia. By the time he was in 7th grade, there was not a lot of competition in gymnastics and he left Connecticut to begin school in New York.

He continually wrote and illustrated while pursuing his schooling and gymnastics. After many awards, Griffin went to the Gymnastic Finals at the National level and was accepted to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

In 1992, Griffin was hit by a car and put into a coma for over a month. More miraculous than surviving, was his will to go on. After studying Justice and Law at Western Connecticut for awhile, he switched to the Theatre Arts with a minor in writing. It was at this time that he was accepted to write for Quest Comics. Realizing that he was not going to receive what he needed in CT, he left before graduating and began performing in New York City. He landed a small part on the TV series *Central Park West*, but the series was short lived. Griffin left the Comic Book Store that he began while at college, and left the gymnastics program that he helped to forge in Brookfield, and went out to Hollywood.

While in Hollywood, Griffin was quickly signed to the Agency. He did bit parts in films, and had several close calls for various commercials. On the set of *Gattaca*, Andrew Nichol spoke with him during lunch one day and suggested that he write too. Griffin was done with school at this point, but Nichol said that he didn't need school, he had the will to learn and needed to get some screenwriting books.

It was at this point, that Griffin's brother, Sean, had contacted him saying that he had hooked up with an amazing Irish traditional player and was forming a new Irish rock band. Sean said that people really liked the songs that Dan had written and if he ever came back, he should look him up. As luck would have it, an emergency brought Dan back to the East Coast, and the Ruffians were formed (but not before one more acting job on Beth Sullivan's TV series, *USMA*).

While Griffin learned the bass guitar, and aided his singer/songwriter brother with songs,

he honed his writing craft. He wrote two TV series with Cheryl Quell, a feature with Les Wicker, and a TV series with David Dwinell. He also began getting back to his love, animation. Based on a nationwide excursion taken with his pocket mouse Merlin on the way to Hollywood, Griffin (under the pen name ST. Bernard) forged the first of his 44 children's books (*The Adventures of Merlin the Mouse*). The band began to grow in reputation (having played at the Joe Strummer Tribute and the Good Friday Agreement) and fan-base and off they went, travelling and playing. Griffin never missed the opportunity to network, make a friend, or share a story.

After a couple years, and some new family obligations for the Griffin brothers, Dan began to focus on his film work a bit more. He had a film optioned by Skylar Entertainment, and fell into a couple more bit parts here and there. It was around this time that filmmaker Jamie Lazarus approached Griffin at a Ruffians gig, with a fantastic video idea. Griffin and Lazarus sat and bounced ideas off one another and before deciding to form a production company of their own.

Griffin and Lazarus worked on a couple short films, a music video for a big group's website, and laid the ground for several new projects. Lazarus realized Griffin's natural talent as a producer and along with Lazarus' directing savvy, it seemed like a relation made to last. But the union began having differences, and the two amiably went their own ways (but not before putting out a shirt for the soldiers of the Gulf War to raise money for the USO).

It was the winter of 2005, right around the time that his book was delayed a bit, that Griffin fell into a lot of work with new media. He had engineered a benefit at the Laugh Factory for Katrina (with PM Dawn, David Marks of the Beach Boys, and Dennis Diken of the Smithereens, the Ruffians, and friend Chris Vaughn), and began assisting with a film. While on the film, he met actress/R&B artist Janet Miranda, and a new direction unfolded.

Griffin had helped Miranda, and a couple weeks later, this favour would be repaid. Miranda was on the set of a feature film and they lost their funding. Miranda told the producer about Griffin, and shortly after, a new skill would be added to the repertoire, one of finding funding. Miranda introduced Griffin to Ms. Davis (a long-time expert and someone whom all the top producers looked to). Davis opened the doors to Griffin, and they have developed a very strong bond.

During the last year, Griffin has been applying his networking abilities to foster and grow his skill as a Producer. Griffin was on the governance board which brought in the new Film Tax Incentives (one of the highest in the country) for the state of Connecticut, and helped open the doors for the building of Utopia (which will be the largest Film Studio in the USA at its completion). He has quadrupled his already large rolodex with new investors, talent, filmmakers, producers, and crew, and can't wait to see what happens this year.

Among his blessings, Griffin has become very dear friends with Maree Agland of Celtic Sorcery Productions, Australia. The two have been both shoulders and sounding boards for each other, and their alliance will be nothing short of remarkable. Griffin is extremely excited to be working under her and knows that the Heavens are the limit.

The two inseparable friends are currently working together on animated cartoons, book series and publicity for Danny's project called *Merlin The Mouse*.