



Football isn't Suggs' only love

Posted July 12, 2010 @ 9:20 a.m. ET
By Dan Parr

The way Ravens OLB Terrell Suggs describes it, his top two loves, in order, are football and film. While he has taken some heat for not attending voluntary workouts in Baltimore this offseason, Suggs says he has been working out with his own personal trainers and will report to training camp in good condition. Between workouts, however, he has spent time working on his filmmaking career. Suggs recently attended the 14th annual American Black Film Festival in Miami and met with Spike Lee and other directors during the Pro-Hollywood Initiative — a new program designed to educate pro athletes about filmmaking.

Suggs is the CEO of his production company, Team Sizzle Worldwide, and his first short film, "sisters," has already premiered. PFW recently spoke with Suggs about meeting Lee, other films he's working on, his reason for not attending OTAs and his relationship with Ravens head coach John Harbaugh.

PFW: I understand you just took a class taught by Spike Lee. What did you learn from him?

Suggs: Just like the basic fundamentals of filmmaking and his style of film. Anybody will tell you that Spike Lee has his own style when he's shooting film. He just adds a unique aspect to filmmaking. It was very informative.

PFW: When you're sitting there taking lessons from Spike Lee, is that kind of a surreal experience?

Suggs: It was like you said. It definitely was a surreal experience. I grew up watching Spike Lee films, and it wasn't just Spike Lee in the room. (There were other directors) like John Singleton, Robert Townsend. These are legendary filmmakers. I was just kind of like a fly on the wall just trying to take everything in.

PFW: Is there one thing Spike Lee said that you'll remember most?

Suggs: Just the conversation. We were having a conversation not only about film, but about athletes and some things in the news. It was genuine conversation. Everybody is amazed by how cool athletes are. We are amazed by how cool directors are, too. So it was just a whole bunch of cool guys.

PFW: I know Spike Lee is a big basketball fan. You don't hear him talk about football as much. Were you able to talk Ravens with him?

Suggs: He talked about Plaxico (Burrell) a little bit. (He said) 'Why do athletes got guns?' He was also talking about LeBron (James) to the Knicks, (Amar'e) Stoudemire to the Knicks. That type of thing.

PFW: How was he feeling about LeBron?

Suggs: He was like, 'We got him.' He said, 'He's there.'

PFW: What's your favorite Spike Lee movie?

Suggs: Wow. There are a lot. I love "Inside Man." I love "Malcolm X." He has a lot of really good films. I don't think I can pick just one. Just off the top of my head, "Inside Man," "He Got Game" and "Malcolm X." Those are the top three.

PFW: I know you just did a movie called "sisters." What's next for you? What's the next project?

Suggs: We wrapped up about two weeks ago our second short film, which was "Marco Polo." It's about an interracial marriage on the rocks and (a woman's) struggle to cope with being in an interracial marriage. So, you'll have to see that one. I'm not trying to give too much away. I want everybody to go see it. We're in pre-production of the third project. It's my own personal project. Be on the lookout for that. We're not playing around. We're really out here trying to make good, quality films.

PFW: Do you have a title for that one yet?

Suggs: Yeah, it's in the works. It's called "Hath No Fury," but I think I might change it.

PFW: How involved are you with these projects? Are you just putting the money up for these things or are you on the set?

Suggs: I'm on set. I'm not just an executive producer. I'm heavily involved in the casting. I kind of co-write the project. If there's something that needs fixing, I fix it.

PFW: How are you able to balance doing all that work with a professional football career? Is it difficult?

Suggs: No, it's not difficult at all. Once you time-manage and prioritize. Football is what pays the bills, so you have to do that first. I do it more in my spare time. ... Instead of going out or playing video games, I'm at home working.

PFW: I know you've been working out on your own this offseason and you think that's a better fit for you than going to all the OTAs and minicamps in Baltimore. Why?

Suggs: I went to the first minicamp and spent the first half of the offseason working out in Baltimore with the team, but I just didn't feel like I was getting exactly everything that I needed. You got 40 or 50 guys all working out at the same time. That may work good for some guys, but not for all guys. See what I'm saying? I just felt like ... I needed to get a little bit more hands-on training. That's why I came back to Phoenix.

PFW: Your head coach, John Harbaugh, said at the end of offseason practices that he expects a "very motivated" Terrell Suggs in training camp. Are you very motivated right now?

Suggs: Yeah, I'm motivated. I don't know exactly what he meant by that, but I'm ready. I think he's kind of taking it with a grain of salt for the

simple fact that last year, when I came (to camp), I still had a shoulder injury. Then I got hurt in training camp. I had a lot of setbacks last year, but, you know, like he said, I guess we expect a real motivated Terrell Suggs.

PFW: It sounds like you might have an issue with his comment. Did that bother you?

Suggs: I just don't know what he meant by it.

PFW: Did he mean that you probably would have liked to have had a better season last year (Suggs had a career-low 4½ sacks in 2009) and you want to come back strong? Is that it?

Suggs: I don't know. I guess that's something you would have to ask him. You don't want to assume the wrong thing.

PFW: Do you like playing for Harbaugh?

Suggs: Yeah, but like any relationship, it's going to have its ups and its downs. It is what it is. He's the coach. I'm the player. We're both trying to achieve a common goal.

PFW: Is the relationship up or down right now?

Suggs: I think it's up. You have to ask him how he feels about it. I think I'm great.

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