

Who Dat? From WTUL Radio to Hollywood South



COURTESY ROB STEINBERG

ROB STEINBERG (A&S '81) says he worked diligently at WTUL radio while he was a student (above). He had a “prime Friday afternoon shift,” ran the business department of the student-operated radio station and spun records on the Quad during the annual Marathon fundraiser.

“We reached deep into the New Orleans music scene. We knew what we were doing was unique and that we were not the typical college radio station,” says Steinberg, who also was a guest disc jockey on the fledgling WWOZ radio station that specializes in the sounds of New Orleans.

After graduation, Steinberg worked in New York in the music industry, representing heavy metal bands. But after he suffered a serious accident, he underwent a long period of recovery and reflection before moving to California to become an actor.

“I decided to be the artist instead of representing the artist,” he says. His break came when he landed a part in *Die Hard 2*. “I starred in some movies that weren’t very interesting and had some small parts in movies and TV shows that were.”

Four years ago, Steinberg moved back to New Orleans and he has found steady work

in Hollywood South.

Steinberg has a pivotal role in the film *12 Years a Slave*, which is the true story of a free black man—Solomon Northup—who is kidnapped and sold into slavery before the Civil War.

Steinberg plays New York shop owner Cephus Parker, who befriends Northup. When Parker gets word (with the help of a character portrayed by Brad Pitt) that Northup has been enslaved, Parker travels thousands of miles to help free his friend.

“I would often tear up in preparing what I needed to bring to the role,” Steinberg says. “I was in awe of my

character’s character. I had to look inside myself to see what was in me, what I could draw upon ... it’s the love of a friend that would make my character go to great lengths to correct an injustice.”

The film, released in movie theaters this fall, won the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival and it is getting Oscar buzz.

Steinberg says that *12 Years a Slave* is a “magnificently important film.” He is proud “to be part of something that is truly special ... it wasn’t just doing a job. I think that all of us who worked on the film felt that way.” —**FRAN SIMON**