

ARTS & CULTURE

## SEQUEL TO INDIE SUPERHERO FLICK SCREENED AT PHILLY COMIC CON

Larry Nichols Apr 5, 2017 0 Comments



“Surge of Power: Revenge of the Sequel,” the long-awaited sequel to the gay superhero film “Surge of Power: The Stuff of Heroes” — created and produced by Philly native Vincent J. Roth — will be screened this weekend at The Great Philadelphia Comic Con.

The first film, which was screen in 2004, released in 2006 and played in theaters, on DVD, Netflix and in other venues, was a lighthearted and somewhat-comedic indie film starring Roth as Gavin Lucas, a corporate attorney who gains superpowers and fights crime. Like the original, the sequel features a number of Hollywood sci-fi actors and guest stars, including Eric Roberts, Nichelle Nichols, Linda Blair and Gil Gerard.

Roth said the first film was inspired by a wave of modern blockbuster superhero films.

“It was the ‘X-Men’ movies and ‘Daredevil,’ because superheroes were starting to show up in leather,” he said. “And also the ‘Spiderman’ movies. That’s when the superhero genre was creating itself as a staple in the movie industry.”

Roth said that his “Surge” films have gotten great responses from straight comic-book fans.

“We’ve played to only mainstream audiences and it’s really exciting to see them enjoy my gay superhero and other characters,” he said. “When you get into the comic and sci-fi fans, their minds are already pretty broad because they’re already open to the possibility of aliens and life on other planets and space travel and super powers. Especially with the popularity of the ‘X-Men’ characters, comic fans in general appreciate the differences in people.”

Roth added that while mainstream audiences are enjoying the film and the comic book and television industries are featuring more LGBT superhero characters than ever, that doesn’t mean that everyone is open to the idea of a gay superhero film.



“Homophobia hasn’t gone away completely,” he said. “There are people that would flat-out not work on the movie because it has a gay theme. There are people who would not support the sequel because it has a gay theme. I think society certainly has improved but there is still a ways to go. The industry is more embracing but it’s not completely devoid of its own level of homophobia and prejudice.”

Roth said that LGBT comic fans have been especially supportive of the film, and he is trying to get the new film screened on the film-festival circuit.

“We’re just now starting to apply to film festivals; a number of them are LGBT film festivals,” he said. “I look forward to playing in front of a gay audience. The [LGBT fans] that have come up to me are happy to see the representation and characters that are clearly out and show the effects that homophobia and lack of tolerance can have on people.”

Inspired by the latest wave of comic book films like “The Avengers,” Roth is making his films with a number of sequels and spin-offs in mind.

“I wanted to build out my universe of characters,” he said. “I even invited other independent studios who have their own superhero characters. They’ve allowed their characters to show up at the end of my sequel to tie in and build up the universe even further, like they do on CW Superhero shows like ‘Supergirl,’ ‘Flash’ and ‘Arrow.’”

*The cast and crew of “Surge of Power: Revenge of the Sequel” will be on hand for a screening at The Great Philadelphia Comic Con April 8 at The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. For more information, visit <http://www.philadelphiaticomiccon.com> or [www.surgeofpower.org](http://www.surgeofpower.org).*



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