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'95 Miles to Go': Director Tom Caltabiano reveals Ray Romano's vulnerabilities

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Tom Caltabiano and Ray Romano
Photo credit: "95 Miles to Go"



Video: [95 Miles to Go \(Intro\)](#)

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Tom Caltabiano met Ray Romano many years ago when the two were doing standup in New York City.

“When you toured in those days, a lot of times you were thrown into what was known as a comedy condo where all of the sudden you are stuck with two other comedians whom you do not know,” Caltabiano said during a recent interview with Examiner.com. “Ray and I hit it off comedically – and also socially – and that is what led to us collaborating on 'Everybody Loves Raymond.'”

In [“95 Miles to Go \(http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight\)”](http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight), which will be available beginning May 22 on DVD at retail stores and rental outlets throughout the Valley, Romano's 8-day drive through the south on a stand-up comedy tour becomes more than he bargains for when Caltabiano brings a film student along to document their journey.

“Ray was reluctantly dragged into it by me,” Caltabiano said. “We had talked about doing this documentary and Ray's manager wanted to get the 'Taxi Cab Confessions' people involved. We were going to have a whole crew that was going to follow us around but Ray didn't want a crew so, instead, I invited this college student along.”

Caltabiano added that Romano is a relatively shy guy to begin with so his standoffishness around said college student is absolutely authentic. And that is what Caltabiano, who not only appears in [“95 Miles to Go \(http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight\)”](http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight) but also serves as its director and one of its producers, is the most appealing part of the project, which was shot back in 2004.

“Ray really lets himself be vulnerable here,” Caltabiano explained. “I think that he becomes much more human and much more likable when you watch his struggles on the road. I also do not

know that everybody knows that Ray was a standup comedian before [starring in] 'Everybody Loves Raymond' and how funny he is off the top of his head.”

Speaking of “Everybody Loves Raymond,” Caltabiano revealed that Romano had always hated the popular sitcom's title. Its origin dates back to when Romano won a CableACE award for his voice work on the animated series “Dr. Katz.” The award was sitting on a table in Romano's parents' house when the actor's brother walked in, took one look at it and uttered, “Everybody loves Raymond.”

“That became the title of the show and Ray hated it because he thought it is such a go-to phrase inviting people to hammer you,” Caltabiano continued. “[But] the show's creator [Phil Rosenthal \(http://www.examiner.com/article/raymond-s-rosenthal-recalls-russian-roadblocks\)](http://www.examiner.com/article/raymond-s-rosenthal-recalls-russian-roadblocks) combined [Ray's vulnerabilities] with real events that happened in people's lives to make this a very sincere and relateable show. It is hard to not love Ray. His wife might disagree, though.”

Caltabiano is grateful for his experience working on “Everybody Loves Raymond” as a producer and a writer. He notes that, at the very least, it beat doing standup in Poughkeepsie as it afforded him a decent living for the first time in his life. He also misses it, which is why he has plans to pitch a sitcom to the broadcast networks this summer. However, he acknowledges that the success of “Everybody Loves Raymond” was a very “lightning in a bottle type of event.”

[“95 Miles to Go \(http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight\)”](http://www.examiner.com/review/95-miles-to-go-ray-romano-documentary-lacks-laughs-insight) (R – 77 minutes) *will be available beginning May 22 on DVD at retail stores and rental outlets throughout the Valley.*



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