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FIRST PERSON

Homecoming

Longtime actor Richard Herd plays a Southie guy like himself for his cameo on the TV show *Rizzoli & Isles*.

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TNT

In this scene, Richard Herd is joined by actors Angie Harmon, left, and Sasha Alexander.

Having a role in TNT's *Rizzoli & Isles* was enjoyable because the show is set in Boston, where I was born and raised. The establishing shots of Boston were filmed in Boston, and they go back for more for newer episodes. The show has a good Boston feel and pace to it. The character I play in the episode, "Partners in Crime," is even from Southie like me.

I grew up in one part or another of South Boston and left for New York when I was 19. As a child I had osteomyelitis, a serious bone infection, and almost didn't survive. I became ill in second grade and went to the Cotting School, as it's now known, in Lexington, for young people with various ailments. I was in and out of Boston Children's Hospital — penicillin knocked out the infection and saved my life. Lying there, month after month, you become very stoic. It really stimulated my imagination and I think actually helped me later as an actor.

I discovered theater in the sixth grade through a school production of *HMS Pinafore* and eventually worked in community theater. Boston was a great theater town when I was growing up. I worked at the Boston Catholic Theatre and the Peabody Playhouse. During a two-year apprenticeship at the Boston Summer Theater, Claude Rains was there for three weeks. One evening he heard a group of us rehearsing Shakespeare and offered to come in early each night to work with us.

After I moved to Hollywood, my career in film and television took off. Now, I'm also a published poet and artist. One of my paintings was accepted in the California Open Exhibition in August. I have been blessed with many opportunities throughout my career.

— *As told to Nick Thomas*

Interview has been edited and condensed.

WATCH IT [Herd](#) appears on TNT's *Rizzoli & Isles* on September 10.

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