

This exec at a talent-friendly content house finds myriad ways to work during the shutdown.

Open House

It's business as unusual for Dave Jargowsky, head of development and production at Comedy Bang! Bang! Productions. Actors self-taping readings. Color correction on iPad Pros. Animation projects all being greenlit.

"We're in a huge traffic jam. If there's an accident on the freeway, it's not like it gets removed and everyone's going sixty miles an hour. Can we get into official preproduction in a month? And be shooting a month later? I'm not sure."

Just weeks into the shelter-in-place order, productions have shut down, but Jargowsky is keeping the ball rolling. There's *Unmatched*, a comedy series with Allen Strickland Williams in development at Quibi, a sketch show in postproduction at Netflix and an animated show in development with Jess McKenna and Zach Reino.

Work-from-home perks like sweatpants and sleeping in don't appeal to Jargowsky. He greets the dawn with a bike ride, then puts in a full day at his home computer in office attire.

"Anything that used to be a five-minute call now has to be scheduled as a fifteen-minute Zoom. The day gets booked quickly," he says. "But the lawyers still call when I'm making dinner."

Originally from the Catskills, Jargowsky studied music and business technology at NYU before moving into investment banking. That business savvy came in handy when his wife's job took the couple to Los Angeles and they fell in with the comedy crowd.

"I met some of the comedians' reps dealing with licensing agreements and contracts, and I realized, There's a job in this, even for me as a non-creative," he says.

In 2008, that light bulb moment led to his first industry job — partner

at HotHouse Productions, the producer of Adult Swim's *Mr. Pickles*. In 2012, Jargowsky's friend Jeff Ullrich, a cofounder of the Earwolf podcasting network, introduced him to Earwolf cofounder

Scott Aukerman, who'd created *Comedy Bang! Bang!* as a podcast (and then remade it as a TV show for IFC).

Given the growing popularity of Aukerman and other comedy podcasters like the Sklar Brothers and Paul Scheer, Jargowsky spotted an opportunity. "I made the pitch that television and video seemed like an organic extension to podcasting," he says.

And *Comedy Bang! Bang! Productions* was born. Selling its first show, *Bajillion Dollar Properties*, to Seeso, went so smoothly, Jargowsky had another a-ha moment.

"It felt like this was what I always wanted to do," he says. "I liked being able to strip away the barriers and mysteries in business."

Bajillion, cast with friends of Earwolf like Andy Richter and Adam Scott, quickly established CBB as a talent-friendly content house that also offered production services.

"Word travels fast in that community," he says. "Our ethos was to work with friends, keep a low enough overhead to be transparent, establish good partnerships and develop things that creators want to make."

These days he finds solace in animated shows. "With animation, we can write scripts, cast it and get it on the air, even if we're quarantined until 2022."

That said, he misses his "work family," and the fun they had shooting the Netflix sketch show. "It was the last social contact I've really had. I'm watching cuts even though we're not able to be together. I feel very nostalgic for early March 2020." —Hilary Hattenbach