Knock, knock, who's there?

Pregnant pause: Seth Rogen and Katherine Heigl share an awkward meal in Knocked Up

Seth Rogen's role in Knocked Up was a case of life imitating art, writes **SALLY BROWNE**

WITH Seth Rogen, what you see is what you get. The Canadian actor, who plays amiable slacker Ben Stone in the romantic comedy *Knocked Up*, says his scenes in the movie aren't far off his real-life experiences.

In the film, directed by *The 40 Year Old Virgin*'s Judd Apatow and also starring Paul Rudd, Ben gets a surprise when his one-night stand with attractive *E! News* presenter Alison Scott (played by *Grey's Anatomy*'s Katherine Heigl) turns into a life-changing situation after she falls pregnant.

That might be a stretch from Seth's reality, but the scenes where Ben hangs out at home with his friends, who play pranks on each other and watch DVDs all day, are not far off.

"I actually lived with a lot of those guys," Rogen says. "Those were my actual best friends those guys. It was at times literally identical to what you see in the movie. We all took pictures of our apartments and gave them to the set decorators, and that's how they made the set."

Rogen's deep, booming laugh is easy to warm to. You get the feeling he'd be a fun guy to hang out with, provided you were equipped with safety gear.

"They would just ask us, 'What do you guys do in your free time?' We would smoke weed and then light boxing gloves on fire and beat the crap out of each other with them," he says. "There's no good reason to do that, but it is what we did."

The scenes where Ben deals with Alison's burgeoning pregnancy were less familiar to him. So he approached them in the most realistic way possible. He did almost no research.

"I kind of felt, the less I know about this the more I can infuse that into the scenes, and hopefully the funnier it will be."

Rogen, 25, was a comedy prodigy in Canada, performing stand-up from the age of 13. He says he has never had a real job. His first on-screen role was in the short-lived but critically acclaimed high-school comedy *Freaks and Geeks*, also directed by Judd Apatow.

Rogen starred in Apatow's follow-up *Undeclared*, for which he was invited to write. He also appeared in *The 40 Year Old Virgin*. He then received a call to write for Sacha Baron Cohen's *Da Ali G Show*.

"That was really an insane honour. It was scary. When I first got the call if I wanted to meet with Sacha I initially said 'No', because I was too scared to meet him. Then I thought about it for a day and I was, like, 'No, I should actually go do that, that's a big opportunity'. And we just got on really well and became friends."

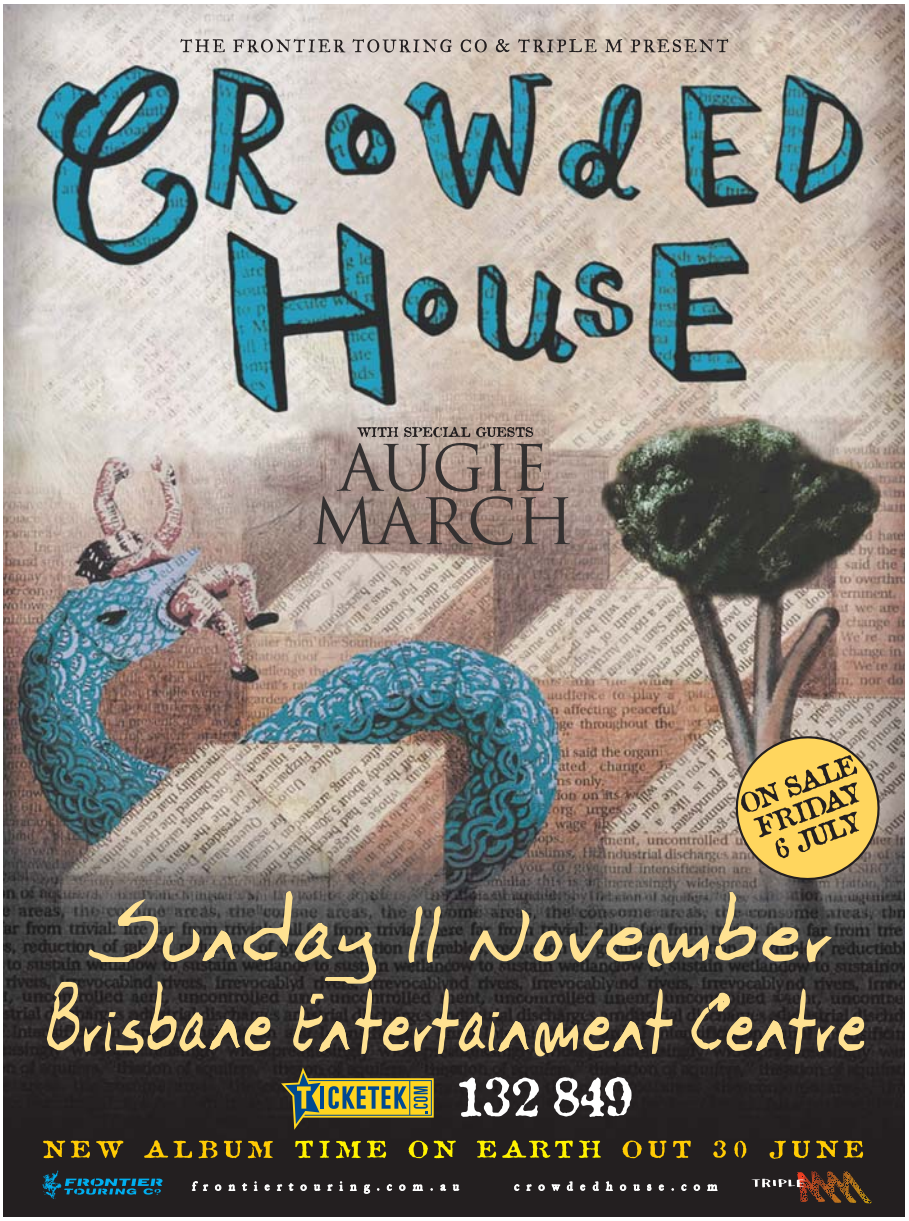
Rogen has a film due out in September, *Superbad*, which he began writing 10 years ago with high-school writing partner Evan Goldberg, and boasts that the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper described it as "the filthiest high school movie ever, and one of the funniest".

It's easy to picture Rogen's pad in LA. A fan of Led Zeppelin and Wu-Tang Clan, he has plenty of posters, including a framed photo of himself with Wu-Tang's MC, RZA. His favourite movies are *Lethal Weapon* and *Batman* and, although he enjoys making romantic comedies like *Knocked Up*, his dream role would "involve a cape — that's all I know".

Rogen reckons the comics, actors and writers he hangs out with help each other out, offering advice on each other's scripts. He called on Sasha Baron Cohen for advice on an early print of *Knocked Up*.

"He loved it!" Rogen says. "He wasn't helpful at all."

***Knocked Up* opens on Thursday.**



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