

A CONVERSATION WITH DANIEL GODDARD

Soap star will throw out the first pitch for the Hens today

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BY RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Daniel Goddard is not who you think he is.

He's a daytime soap star with a background in finance. He's a celebrity who enjoys photographing homeless people.

So perhaps it makes sense that this afternoon, even though he's never attended a baseball game, the native Australian will throw out the first pitch for the Mud Hens.

Goddard, 37, who plays Cane Ashby on *The Young and the Restless*, will be on hand for Sunday's 2 p.m. game as part of the team's Mother's Day festivities, signing autographs and offering photo ops.

Fans of the show already know why he was named the sexiest man on soaps last year by TV Guide Network, but there's more to be said about the thoughtful, enthusiastic actor than just that. He recently spoke with *The Blade* by phone about his upcoming visit, how he got into acting, and why soap operas are a metaphor for life.



Soap star Daniel Goddard.

Q: Your bio says that you enjoy quantitative mathematics and that you study the stock market ...

A: The thing that is funny about that is that when I was about 17, about 16-17, my parents sort of wanted me to get into finance and I always wanted to act. And so I kind of appeased my parents and I went to university, studied economics, and I also went and did a course on the Australian stock market ... I had one subject left and I quit. And the thing is that with the hindsight now being 50-50, I realize that I made the right choice.

Q: Soaps have always been kind of escapist in nature. How important do you think that is these days?

A: It's so essential. You look at any form of entertainment. I mean, you look at the concept of a feature film. You go into a big dark room with a bunch of people. You have this one collective energy in this dark environment focusing on this one point on the wall, you know, and that's a very powerful medium. And then people get swept up in the emotion. They go on that escapist journey. ... And I think that people, when they have their own trials and tribulations and their own downturns and emotional roller coasters in life, they like to escape to that. So it's very important. I think that soaps [are] one of the true and tested mediums for that.

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Q: In soaps there are all kinds of crazy twists and turns that take place ... How seriously are you able to take your character and your acting with all of that?

A: You know what's funny about that? My character has a huge twist and turn coming up ... The thing about soaps that's so difficult is that you never know where you're going. You don't know what's going to happen, but the irony of that is that it's a metaphor for life because you don't know where you're going next.

Q: Going back to your early days when you made the switch to acting, how did you do that?

A: The most difficult part was telling my dad, who wanted me to have everything he never had. ... My dad worked like 11 days straight with a couple days off to provide for the family. So when I said, "Hey I'm leaving and I'm going to go and pursue acting," which is one of those jobs that you just never know, you know, because acting is such a strange animal. Because you may be the greatest actor in the world, but if you're not a good auditioner you'll never get the job.

Q: What kind of training did you have after you left school?

A: I left school and I went to an acting school in Australia, which was the equivalent of the Actor's Studio, and you learn that basically you need to make a choice when you look at a scene. The first thing you do is you say to yourself, what is this scene about? ... They call it acting, but technically it's reacting. ... You learn that everything is merely about listening and then when you listen and you hear what the person says, it should cue what you say, your dialogue...

Q: What do you see as your career path now? Do you see yourself sticking with daytime television?

A: I really enjoy where I'm at right now. I have a 3-year-old; I also have a 4-month-old son. I have two boys. It allows me to be based in LA. Like, 10 minutes ago I was laying in bed with my 3-year-old who woke up early, and I was just laying there telling him a story and then I came down here to talk to you. It allows me to do that. It allows me to be with my family, and I think at this stage in my life and in their life and in this economy especially it's lovely to have stability.

Q: What kinds of things do you do in your downtime?

A: I'm a huge auto racing fan. I raced last year in the Pro/Celebrity Long Beach Grand Prix, which ... was one of the greatest, greatest experiences of my life. ... I'm a huge photographer ... For about 15 years now I photograph homeless people — women, predominantly women who work in subsistence or third world economies. ... I've got a book I'm putting together so I'm real excited about that.

Q: Why have you decided on the portraits that you do?

A: Most people that you meet will blanket or mask the truth of their day-to-day grind with a face of either valor or something else. You'll never really get to know what it is they feel. But I mean, I've met so many homeless people. I've caught a lot of candid portraits and they'll turn and at the moment they turn I'll take the shot and you can see in the eyes of the people, you see everything.

Q: Since this will be your first ball game ... do you have anyone who's sort of coaching you on how this is all going to work?

A: No, no. I'd love to throw the first pitch. I haven't even gone to anybody about that yet. I've heard some people go and throw a pitch at the Dodgers game or something. I'm like, "Really? You get to throw the baseball?" I'm like, should I be audacious enough to be like, "Can I throw the ball? I just hope I don't hurt anybody in the stands because in cricket we bowl the ball, we don't pitch it.

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

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