

The David Soul Appreciation Club **NEWSLETTER**

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Kindly authorised by D Soul

Dear Members,

Here is what David has been up to in July:

- **Jerry Springer, The Musical** - David commenced his role in the show on Monday 12th.

Other Information

The Narrows - Orion have recently issued the audio book of the latest novel by Michael Connolly narrated by David. It costs approximately £12.99 and its ISBN No is; 0752866664.

Merchandise - DSAC member Gwen Rollinson is selling various posters, photos from the Starsky and Hutch film. Anyone interested in details, prices, etc can contact her at: Flat 22, Montpellier Court, Montpellier Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 1J.

Daily Telegraph interview kindly transposed by DSAC member Elizabeth Barrett

In lieu of a career plan, David Soul has always adhere to what he calls a "throw it up against the wall and see what sticks" approach to life. It's a nice idea but he probably didn't reckon on the sticking power of Starsky and Hutch, the Los Angeles police which - during its heyday - made him one of the most famous men in the world. In millions of minds he is still irrevocably cast in the role of Detective Ken Hutchinson, a blond, vegetarian police officer who sent teenage girls potty by leaping on to the roof of a red and white car during the opening credits. In Britain the show was compulsive Saturday night viewing, but it was only when Soul visited the country in the late 1970s that he realised quite what a rumpus he'd caused here.

"I remember 5,000 screaming girls meeting me at the airport" he says, stubbing out one cigarette while fumbling to light the next. "They were all going crazy and pawing at me, trying to get a piece of the cake. I felt like saying to them "Well, look, really you could say please! Just cool it, OK? I'm just a very private guy."

I have come to meet this very private guy at the Cambridge Theatre in Covent Garden where, last Monday, he took on the title role in Jerry Springer the Opera - an incarnation in which he is less likely to find himself begging teenage girls to unhand him. The initial idea was that we would adjourn to a local hotel for tea but in the end I am ushered into Soul's dressing room where I find him padding round in bare feet blearily struggling to find the socket for his electric kettle.

"It's the management." he says, stumbling across the room to extract a half litre bottle of milk from a fridge full of Champagne. (There have been reports of an alcohol problem but he points out that he "never drinks before the show") "They come in here and they disconnect everything. What do they think? That I'm gonna burn the place down?"

It would not be inconceivable. For while Soul appears poignantly eager to please (he concludes most of his sentences by giggling explosively and twice asks me to reassure him that we're "having some laughs, aren't we?") he also comes across as preternaturally shambolic. His dressing table is littered with bananas and packets of Marlborough Lights of which he says he smokes "as many as I can fit in," grinding out the remains into an ashtray wobbling precariously on the arm of the sofa. As it presumably occurred to the show's casting directors, at 60 he looks more like Jerry Springer than anyone capable of leaping onto the roof of a car. He tells me that he does not eat healthily ("I'm not into that") - a fact reflected in the paunch blossoming beneath his sweatshirt. "Doing this show is a little bit like going on a diet because I am always sweating like a pig," he says cradling his ashtray on the crest of his stomach. "So who knows? Maybe it will get me back in to shape."

Of more interest is whether it will get him back to anything approaching the sort of popularity he enjoyed in the 1970s. Since it opened three years ago the play has garnered awards ("A Musical with a touch of genius" according to The Daily Telegraph "The hottest ticket in town" said The Guardian ...) while even Springer himself was reported by one critic to have been "laughing cheerfully" throughout the first night.

The action is set during a typical Springer show with guests confronting their nearest and dearest with lurid accounts of sexual betrayal and coprophilia, expressed in arias inspired by Handel and Bach. Soul appears unnervingly well adapted to Springer's role - hand gestures and all - though he says he has neither met him nor followed his show. "I never even saw it before I did this." he says "It wasn't the sort of thing that I'd go for. But you could say I've kind of come round to it. I don't think it's vile. I think it is acknowledging the way things really are. It can illuminate the human condition."

The human condition is clearly something to which Soul has given considerable thought. He came to Britain in 1995 with his girlfriend Alexa Hamilton (his "sixth long term partner" according to one British tabloid,) and says his decision to remain was prompted by his "European point of view about things."

"I enjoy reading a newspaper and walking on the street, which are things that you don't do in America, because in America you drive a car and you watch television. You eat, you excrete and you watch TV. In London it's different. When I leave London and return it feels like coming home."

Which all sounds rather lofty coming from the man who will be pigeonholed in the annals of history under light entertainment playing a hippy cop in a camp television show. (A role few predicted when he first launched his career in the 1960s as "The Covered Man", performing in a balaclava.) Does he mind? "Of course now. If you make people happy, why should you be unhappy with it? It's 25 years later and I'm just grateful for every night I work." Although it has been suggested that he is keen to shrug off the label of Hutch, he appears reasonably proud of it, fondly recalling the "crazy fans" and the house he built himself in Los Angeles while still drawing his salary: "I built a mansion. Now that's different."

The only point on which he appears tetchy is the show's much commented on homoerotic charge between Hutch and Starsky who was played by Paul Michael Glaser. In the past Soul has himself conceded that "We were called

the two prime time homos." though this afternoon he is less sanguine. "I find that discussion to be absolutely ludicrous," he says heaving himself forward to grab, slightly petulantly, at his coffee.

"It's so stupid I can't believe it. There's nothing stronger than the affection between two men, so why can't they show it? Do you call every girl that hugs another girl a lesbo?"

Earlier this year, there was a feature film remake of the show, starring Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson. When the project was announced, Soul was equally frosty ("They ain't Starsky or Hutch, and to cast them as such cheats a huge audience who grew up with Glaser and Soul in the roles," but he later agreed to appear in a cameo role. He says the decision was prompted largely by Glaser, to whom he has remained close since the show folded. "In a way we kind of owed it to the people who liked the show So we just said "OK."

He and Glaser had plans to make their own Starsky and Hutch film, in which the detectives were to meet up 20 years on. In this version one would still be a cop; the other (Hutch, to hazard a guess) would be an anti capitalist protester.)

"We wanted to bring closure to our relationship both for us and for the audience that grew up with us. The show was all about friendship, and that's what we'd bring some closure to. It would involve not only what happened to Starsky and Hutch but also what happened to Paul Glaser and David Soul."

Some of it might make pretty, harrowing viewing. Glaser lost his wife and daughter to Aids. Soul - the son of a Lutheran parson from South Dakota - has had four wives. ("Why so many? I don't know. Probably for the same reason that I smoke so many cigarettes.") In the early 1980s he was also ordered to attend therapy classes for alcoholism after attacking the third, Patti, when she was seven months pregnant.

"I think every time you lose a balance in your life you lose the plot", he says. "I was losing the balance because I was working 18 hours a day and I came home drained, lubricating the emptiness with booze and then if someone pushes the wrong button ... well, off you go."

In a script that sounds vintage Springer, his first wife had also pushed a wrong button, some years earlier, by going off with his best friend. "I walked in and found him with her and it sort of cracked it up. It's pretty heavy duty to walk in and find someone screwing your wife."

He has since had anger management therapy from which he has learned that anger is OK but rage is not: "I am angry and there's no reason to say I'm not angry. When I was growing up as a kid my mother was always saying "You're so angry. Don't be angry with me." Well, I thought, "Why not?" Anger is a source of great strength. It's like an engine in a racing car you can put it in forward and you do a lot of good but it's not so good in reverse. Rage is anger out of control."

Is he still in therapy? "Of course not. But I probably still need it. I guess I haven't got rid of all my demons because if I had I'd be a pretty boring guy."

His professional career since leaving Starsky and Hutch has been less dramatic. He has appeared in mini series and in Michael Winner movies, he has directed episodes of Miami Vice and in the late 1970s he had a brief stint as a global pop sensation, with hits such as Silver Lady and Don't Give Up On Us which he hopes to rerelease later this year.

"It's a great song." he says erupting from the sofa and lurching towards a hi fi system on his dressing table. "Listen to this! Just listen to this!" Soul's eyes suddenly glaze over as the lyrics start percolating around the dressing room. "I love this. I just love it. Were you around when it came out?" Just.

He says he launched his singing career in a mask because "I wanted to be known for my music not what I looked like." He now has more meaty matters to put his name to.

He has made a series of documentaries embracing subjects such as Native American land rights and the industrialisation of farming in the Midwest. In Pittsburgh he was arrested for disturbing the peace while protesting against the closure of the city's steelworks.

"I'm not Mother Theresa." he explains scrunching up his depleted cigarette packet. "I don't go out looking for things. But when something raises its head I like to get involved."

He says he is "not overly interested in money." which is just as well. He and Glaser sold their 7.5% share in the show for \$1000,000 apiece shortly before the international syndication was brokered. Had he hung on, he could have had millions.

Instead since moving to London he is rumoured to have been leading a hand to mouth existence subsisting off his sporadic stage appearances. At one point he was said to be living in a dingy bedsit in the West End but he insists the reports confused his home with his office.

Either way, he points out that his present West End pay packet isn't stretching very far. "I've got six children" he says. "Six! Well you tell me how much I need to earn until I feel rich."

Perhaps his most surprising career move came in 1996 when he was invited to assist Martin Bell in his crusade against Neil Hamilton in Tatton. Soul had been impressed by comments Bell had made on Newsnight about journalistic ethics.

"I left a message and he phoned me back within 20 minutes." he recalls "During the campaign I would go round knocking on doors and introduce myself. I'd say "Hello, my name is David Soul." Well, I tell you, their mouths just fell right open."

After we have been talking long enough for Soul to consume one mug of coffee and nine cigarettes, his publicity manager arrives to escort him off to be photographed. "We're thinking maybe you could pose downstairs, David, smoking in front of the "No Smoking" sign. And we're thinking that maybe we could have you wearing a T-Shirt saying "F... 'em." That would be quite a neat image.

Soul pauses for a moment, suddenly looking crestfallen "But I'm a benign guy," he says, stumbling across the dressing room in search of his shoes. "Why can't you have me posing in front of some "f...in' flowers?"

In friendship