

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

CAMERON DADDO'S BEEN A HOUSEHOLD NAME FOR OVER 20 YEARS. HAVING CARVED OUT A CAREER IN HOLLYWOOD, HE'S CURRENTLY BACK IN AUSTRALIA STARRING IN THE STAGE MUSICAL LEGALLY BLONDE. INTERVIEW BY MATTHEW MYERS.

DNA: Tell us about your role as Professor Callahan in *Legally Blonde*.

Cameron Daddo: He's a Harvard Law Professor running his own billion-dollar firm. And while actively teaching, he's also plucking out the best of the best for the company. He ends up with Elle (Lucy Durack) as his intern, but I think it's more about her looks than her ability.

Have you watched the original movie?

I didn't want to see it until after I was well and truly into the run of the show. When I did eventually see it, I didn't take anything in as I think the musical is better written.

Twenty years ago, you moved to Hollywood.

What's been the biggest nightlight?

Well, I've had a couple of highlights. I spent quite a bit of time at Skywalker Ranch with George Lucas. Working with David Lynch was a pretty big one, too.

How did working with George Lucas come about?

That was through the *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, where I played an Australian Light Horseman. Simon Wincer directed it for George and asked me if I was available to play the role. It was brilliant. We rode horses



Daddo as Brian Peterson in the '90s American soap opera, *Models Inc.*

in Prague and Turkey and I was very proud to wear that uniform. We did full gallops across the Turkish plains with bayonets drawn and jeeps running alongside us with cameras rolling. I'm not that good a rider, but I was good enough between action and cut.

And David Lynch?

I was doing a movie called *The Perfect Sleep*. The director (Jeremy Alter) was coordinating David Lynch's new movie *Inland Empire*. Jeremy liked my work and asked if I was interested in meeting David. There was no script to read because it was actually on index cards all over Lynch's hallway! Alter said he wanted to give my headshot to David. That's actually how David casts! He sometimes meets you, but he usually casts from headshots. So I got the job and met him first on set. He said to me, "I like collecting interesting people."

That would have been an interesting cast, too.

I played the manager of Justin Theroux. So my first scene on that film was with Justin Theroux, Laura Dern, Jeremy Irons and Harry Dean Stanton. The five of us were there in a room for a meeting, plus David Lynch was

"One night on stage, mid-song, the strap broke and my pants fell straight down and I was standing there in my dancing belt."

there, too, smoking. It was so trippy. I remember him ducking down under the camera and his cigarette smoke wafting up in front of the lens. **CSI, The Mentalist, Without A Trace, NCIS – you've had quite a few roles in US crime dramas.**

I was grateful for the opportunities to do them. I was baddy of the week. Living in Hollywood, if you're not on your own show, it's basically guest shots or recurring roles. When you audition, you never know how big the part is going to be and you just roll the dice. But these were top shows and I recurred on *24* and *Boston Legal*, which was great.

Who's the biggest star you've met?

Probably the biggest star in his prime was Tom Cruise. There have been people who have gone on to become stars like Hugh Jackman and Russell Crowe, but as a person at the top of their game at the time, it was Tom. He's a really great guy and became a terrific friend.

I believe you're good friends with Ed O'Neill from *Modern Family*.

Yes, my son is in his daughter's class and they

get along really well. We end up hanging out at parties. They also did circus training together, so Ed and I have sat for hours side by side watching the kids do their silks and tumbling. He's a good fellow.

Do you have gay mates?

Yeah, a lot. There are a lot of gay guys in *Legally Blonde* and they have become mates. When we were living in Hollywood, we had a couple of gay guys living next door, actually much like the guys in *Modern Family*. They adopted a child, too. I have a bunch of gay mates, but I don't even think about them as gay really, even though they do go on Grindr!

Do you realise that gay guys see you as a silver fox daddy?

[Laughs] Good. I'm doing my job correctly. A silver fox daddy is nice. Actually, my godson calls me daddy daddo.

If you were gay, who would you go for?

[Laughs] Rob Mills. Actually, I'll say Gerard Butler, from when he's in the movie *Chasing Mavericks*.

You get mentioned on websites such as *Shirtless Men On The Blog* and *Gay-or-straight.com*. Do you ever get concerned about appearing on social media sites?

No, because what anyone else says is not about me. Even if it appears to be about me, they are really writing about themselves.

When it comes to music, who is your diva?

Lucy Durack [star of *Legally Blonde*]. It's all about the Chihuahua!

Gay marriage in Australia. Do you think it will happen?

I hope so. There's no reason it shouldn't. The opposition to it is moronic and so out of touch. It will change, though. Put it this way, if it got the politicians' votes, then they'd allow it for sure.

Has any particular person been a major influence on your career?

I've had several mentors throughout my career. There was the late Australian actor John Ewart and the late John Hargreaves who was a brilliant actor. And John Bell from the Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company. When I worked on *Big River*, I had both him and John English as mentors. Gee, they're all Johns! [Laughs] Johns are usually dudes who run hooker agencies!

Have you ever had an industry wardrobe malfunction?

Oh yeah. During *Big River*, my costume was a pair of baggy yellow overalls, with one strap and a blue shirt. One night on stage, mid-song, the strap broke and my pants fell straight down and I was standing there in my dancing belt. I had to pull them back up and keep singing. I was showered in safety pins for the rest of the act because I wasn't able to leave the stage. I had to sew up my pants as we were singing!

Legally Blonde is playing at the Princes Theatre Melbourne, from 9 May.