

SURFHERO

WHEN HE'S NOT PLAYING
A SUPERHERO OR BODY
DOUBLING ON AUSTRALIAN
MOVIE SETS, DANIEL NELSON
IS COMPETING IN IRONMAN
EVENTS. INTERVIEW BY
MATTHEW MYERS.

DNA: You play an array of characters at Warner Bros Movie World, are there any in particular you like the most?

Daniel Nelson: Flash and the Green Lantern are great, but I'd have to go with Batman because in our fight shows, he's the main character that everyone cheers for. I also love the films, too, which I watched as a kid.

You have a background in martial arts and surf lifesaving. Do you incorporate this training into your stunt work?

I think surf lifesaving has helped a lot. I've noticed after a show some of the other guys are huffing and puffing where I'm not. Having that fitness, along with my Ironman training, helps. Some of the shows are pretty full on! Batman is always fighting thugs or ninjas, and sometimes I play a prison guard fighting Catwoman.

Is it true you've also worked on a Nutri-Grain commercial?

About two years ago a casting agent came down to the surf club at Northcliffe and wanted a few guys to be Ironmen in a Nutri-Grain commercial. In a way that kick-started my acting career.

Did you also appear on the cereal boxes?

[Laughing] They leave that for the big guns like Shannon Eckstein and Ky Hurst.

You worked with another DNA Straight Mate, Richie Brancatisano, in the shark thriller, *Bait*. What was that experience like?

That was by far the best experience that I've had as an actor. I had a few training days with Richie, teaching him how to paddle the rescue board and I also did some stunt doubling for Julian McMahon. We shot at Coolangatta Beach and it was pretty special.

In the real world, have you ever come across a shark in the ocean?

At training one day there was just myself and Max Beattie, who is the current New Zealand Ironman champion. I was casually doing some backstroke and he was next to me doing freestyle, but he suddenly picked up as we swam into shore. I asked him what happened and he said, "Dude there was a big shark under you!" I had no idea! I haven't seen one face to face, and I don't particularly want to. We do see a lot of dolphins, whales and turtles.

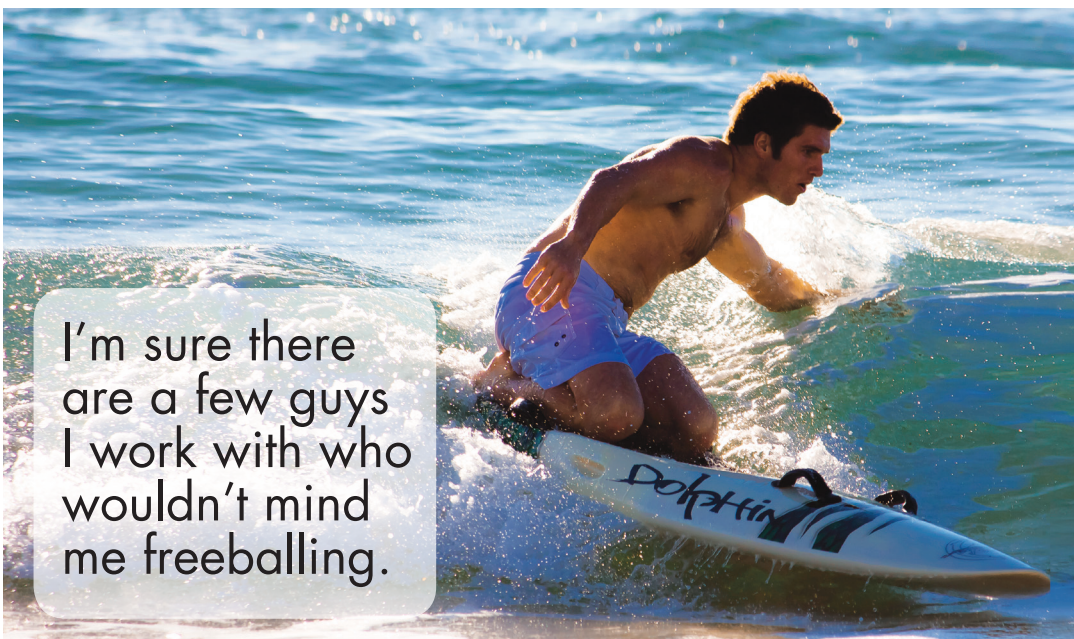
How long have you been competing in Ironman titles?

I've been doing Ironman racing since I was 14 and when I was in New Zealand I won the under-19s Ironman title, as well as the board and ski title all in the same year. That was pretty cool. Australia is a bit harder, but getting into the Open Ironman Aussie semi-finals got me pretty stoked.

You've got the looks and the body. Do you ever get hit on by guys?

If I have, I haven't noticed. I haven't been into a gay bar, but I'm sure I'd enjoy it. [Laughing] That sort of thing wouldn't worry me at all.

I guess if you asked me that when I was a



teenager it would have been different. But I now know a lot of gay guys in the industry, especially at Movie World, and I certainly don't have a problem with it.

If you were gay, who would you go for?

I'd go for Ryan Kwanten. He's pretty good looking for a bloke. He gets his shirt off quite a bit in *True Blood*!

Who is your diva?

She's not mainstream, but her name is Lisa Mitchell, from Melbourne. She's a bit folky and I really like her music. If it were someone bigger, I'd go for Katy Perry.

Where do you stand on gay marriage?

I support it. I think gay marriage is a great thing and if two people love each other it doesn't matter what their sex is.

Is there anyone in the entertainment industry you look up to?

I like Chris Hemsworth. I have something in common with him in terms of looks and he plays the type of characters I like to play, right back to *Home And Away*!

You would be great in Summer Bay, especially with the Ironman background.

Yes, I could compete in the Ironman championships for Summer Bay.

Don't forget fending off those sharks.

Yes, and shark wrestler!

Who is the most famous person you've encountered?

When I was 14, Tom Cruise was filming *The Last Samurai* in my hometown of New Plymouth, New Zealand. We have a mountain there which looks very much like Mount Fuji in Japan, where the story is set. He came to the beach I was training at and my mum ran up and said hello to him, but at the time I wasn't too bothered and just went off and had a shower [laughing].

What is your porn star name? (Your first pet

and the street you grew up on).

It's Misty Branch!

I'm glad it's not Misty Twig.

[Laughing] I'd rather be a branch than a twig.

On that note and as an Ironman, do you think budgie smugglers get a bad rap?

They probably do, but they don't really bother us. I've noticed the tight bike pants ones are coming in, but I haven't jumped on that bandwagon yet. I'm still rocking the budgie smugglers!

You did a Bonds underwear commercial. In their latest ads, Pat Rafter acts very coy. Is it as nerve-racking as it seems?

I don't think I was that nervous about it, probably because I wear Speedos a lot. Plus I don't have anything down there to be embarrassed about [laughs]. But it was fun, and the girls were in their undies as well.

Otherwise, do you prefer jocks, boxers or freeballing?

I used to freeball a lot, but working at Movie World and doing a lot of costume changes, I now have to wear jocks! But I'm sure there are a few guys I work with who wouldn't mind me freeballing [laughs].

So Batman wears his underwear on the inside and the outside?

The Batman I play doesn't wear underwear on the outside, as we use the Christian Bale suit. Although we sometimes use another suit which is a bit more Adam West-like and that does have the underpants on the outside!

Do people ever say you look a bit like Christopher Reeve?

People do say I look like him and it's cool that they think that. Maybe one day I'll get to play Superman!

more: Warner Bros Movie World on the Gold Coast is open every day of the year, except ANZAC Day and Christmas Day.