

OSHER

99 ISSUES OF DNA AGO, MATTHEW MYERS BEGAN HIS SERIES OF STRAIGHT MATE INTERVIEWS. HIS FIRST WAS WITH A MAN KNOWN AS ANDREW G, A CO-HOST OF AUSTRALIAN IDOL, RADIO DJ AND HEARTTHROB. TO CELEBRATE THE 100TH STRAIGHT MATE INTERVIEW WE DECIDED TO CHECK IN WITH ANDREW TO SEE WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE 2004. PLENTY! HE'S NOW KNOWN AS OSHER GÜNSBERG AND IS PURSUING HIS MEDIA CAREER IN THE USA. BUT HE'S A STILL A GREAT ALLY OF THE GAY COMMUNITY, AND STILL SUPER HOT. HURRAH!

DNA: It's great to chat again after all these years. How has life changed?

Osher Günsberg: Life is way better now, and I'm grateful for the journey that I've been on. I got engaged, married, moved country then got unmarried and went on to be the first Australian to host a live national primetime show in the US [*Live To Dance*]. When I look at that last interview I was blond and crazy! I was pretty loose back then and I'm very thankful to all the people who tolerated me over the last nine years. I was able to pull my head in and learn some valuable lessons. A lot has changed since then, except I was mostly single then and I'm single now.

Which was the most valuable lesson you learned?

I wouldn't wish it on anybody, but getting divorced. After all the energy you put into a marriage when it breaks down it's just very harrowing. You can go one of two ways with the breakdown of a relationship. You can use it as resentment or justification, or you can take that energy and use it to pull yourself together and take a long hard look at your role in what went wrong. Everyday I work as hard as I can to try and live free of fear. Fear can manifest itself as many different things such as anger, jealousy or worthlessness. I'm not perfect at it, but self-awareness is a massive thing and I'm seventy per cent there.

That sounds like a huge self-discovery.

I've learnt that things happen for us, not to us. For example, when *Australian Idol* didn't come back, it didn't happen to me (which was a bit tricky at the time) but I realise now it happened for me. I got the opportunity to learn a valuable lesson. It was a chance for spiritual growth.

You've also changed your name to Osher Günsberg.

[Laughing] I was never in my radio or television career known by my real name. Throughout my whole life people always gave me nicknames. It's a very simple story of being told that changing your name changes the energy around your life, so I did and it happened. I'm such a different man and I like that I'm Osher now, because I don't relate to that other guy anymore. All my friends call me Osher, so you can too.

Are you aware of [radio comedy duo] Hamish and Andy likening Osher Günsberg to expensive shoes, champagne and pool tables?

[Laughing] I'm actually sitting on an Osher Günsberg couch right now! I love those boys so much. They are gloriously wonderful and talented. They represent everything that's right about Australian media.

When we last spoke, you were "fucking flummoxed" by the fact gay Australians can't marry. Since that time it's become a reality in many countries. What do you think is holding us back?

I think, like anything, fear is what's holding us back. My brother and his boyfriend are the most wonderful human beings you could ever meet and they so deserve to get married. Fuck, I couldn't keep a marriage together so why not give them a shot! I love them so much and nothing would make me happier than going to their wedding. Anyone who has a problem with same-sex marriage is not looking hard enough into his or her own community, because I can guarantee you that someone you work with everyday isn't heterosexual. Have a closer look at your own family and what is inside you. Like the internet song says, it's okay to not like things, but don't be a dick about it. Seriously though, it's very important to me to be a part of your magazine. I'm very passionate about gay rights and equality, and I want to do everything that I can to help that cause. It makes me want to fucking cry that my bro can't get married. It really does.

and owning a magazine. I got to the point of being good at what I do and knowing television backwards, so I thought why not take a shot at doing some of my own producing rather than being a paid performer.

You live in Venice Beach, California. Is life like an episode of *Baywatch*?

No, it's more like an episode of *Cops*! It's pretty sketchy at times, but I really like it. I live right near the sand and love walking down past the million dollar homes, where a guy will be sleeping outside in a cardboard box. There'll be black kids, some Hispanic people, a Norwegian guy on a bike, German tourists or people visiting from Tennessee who have never seen the ocean before. And it all happens right in front of where I live.

In your last interview you explained how much you loved Freddie Mercury. How do you feel about Sacha Baron Cohen playing him in the upcoming movie?

“My brother and his boyfriend are the most wonderful human beings you could ever meet and they so deserve to get married. Fuck, I couldn't even keep a marriage together so why not give them a shot!”

What about your gay mate Mr Wolf? Do you still keep in touch with him?

Oh my goodness, Mr Wolf! He's a journalist now. He's found a way to wield his powers on a much broader scale. I don't want to say who he is, but you've probably read something he's written. He's a feisty one!

Have you made more gay mates in the US?

Of course, I used to live in West Hollywood! And let me tell you that after being married to an Israeli, as a gay man you should go to Tel Aviv tomorrow. Israel has a military where it's okay to be openly gay. It's awesome because you get these guys who are complete fucking badass Rambos that fire shells and blow shit up, and they're not into chicks. One of the big generals is totally gay and nobody blinks. Tel Aviv is amazing. It's right on the Mediterranean, the food is incredible and everyone in the army there is super buff. I got to know the Israeli gay scene which is very confusing because they use feminine pronouns in Hebrew, and use the word she when it's actually he.

What are you doing with yourself these days? I'm concentrating more on producing, creating formats and putting shows together. I guess it's the difference between writing for a magazine

Sacha might be a bit too tall to play Freddie, but I don't think anyone else could come close. We've seen Sacha is not afraid to live fearlessly and do nakedness and man on man action, so he'll probably do the role a lot of justice. Freddie used to do the biggest drag shows in front of 80,000 people and it was fantastic.

This is our Sexiest Men Alive issue. Who is sexy enough to turn you gay?

I've been talking about this lately. As a single man there's a void in my life and I'm aware of the heterosexuality convert that exists within me. I'm sorry to disappoint you because I'm never going to act on it, nor does it arouse me. But it's definitely there and I enjoy it. I really appreciate a very fuckable man! I really appreciate the sexuality that comes with a really good-looking man. Without a doubt, at this point in time it's got to be Channing Tatum. Oh my god, he is so fuckable! He can sing, dance and is super charming. I don't think he's gay, but if he is I'll get back to you and tell you what happens [laughs].

So you've met him?

Yes, a few times. He's an exceptionally charming man. I get why chicks dig him so much. He's the type of man you could trust to spend the day with your mum! >>

>> In 2004 you said how cool it was for gays to have the dating website Gaydar. Do you know about all the dating apps we have now like Grindr, Squirt and Scruff?

A gay mate showed me a live demo of Grindr, and I was very impressed. There is a slightly similar straight version now called Tinder, which is less made-to-order than Grindr. It's quite clear that being heterosexual is very different. It comes down to wanting to be cuddled or wanting to get off.

You're a vegan. Did that come about through a dislike of meat, love of vegetables or an opposition to killing animals?

It's got more to do with the question of resources, as in how much energy it takes to get one kilogram of plant protein compared to one kilogram of animal protein. In the age we live in with only so much space, having an increasing amount of people moving toward a plant based diet will, I believe, be the way we can survive. I'm 39 and became a vegan at 28 and I'm fine. I've run a marathon, and have all the ticks from my doctors. Just because certain things are marketed to you doesn't mean you have to eat them. I'm just saying make your own choices. To me it's the same concept as screwing in an energy-saving light bulb because you believe that within the billions of light bulbs in your city, that one light bulb will make a difference.

You've been face to face with many musical divas. Who is your all-time favourite?

Being in the presence of Madonna you really get the idea of why she is who she is. She's absolutely tiny, like Kylie but smaller, yet she exudes amazing power. If you listen to her early songs like *Lucky Star*, it's not the most amazing vocal track, however for what she was selling... she knew exactly what she was doing. I've had the opportunity to interview her a few times and go toe-to-toe with the most powerful woman in the music industry and it was brilliant. My favourite Madonna song is *Express Yourself* or *Vogue*. Mind you, I was right in the thick of puberty back then too. I used to sleep at night with a massive *Like A Prayer* poster above my bed, where she was on her knees. If only she knew what I used to think when I looked at that poster. Well, she probably did!

Do you ever get compared to Aaron Eckhart or Ashton Kutcher?

I take both of those as a massive compliment. Ashton is a really lovely guy. He's much taller than me and fucking ripped. He's a very well built man, with zero body fat. Bear in mind that once you get to forty like me, things don't go back into place like they used to [Laughs]! I'm training for an ultra marathon and I think anytime you love handles want to leave is totally fine with me!



Osher Günsberg today, checking out DNA and (inset) from 2004 when he was known as Andrew G and was co-host of Australian Idol.

You're really into photography with your 365 Days Project and hosting ABC's Photo Finish. What

are you doing now with your camera?

I've got a surf blog. Being in Venice there's a very interesting surf scene that revolves around this tiny little beach. It's the most accessible beach for 20 million people and it's really interesting to be in such a territorial place, as shown in the film *Lords Of Dogtown*. I get out there in the morning and shoot the surf and if there's something worth seeing at the sea, I put it on Tumblr.

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

Quite easily, it would be James Mathison who is the nicest man I've ever had the opportunity to work with. I learnt something every single day working with him. I'm really grateful to have him in my life. He has this incredible compassionate energy about him and is one of the funniest men I've ever met.

What advice would you give to someone pursuing a career in media?

I got my job at Channel V by sending in a demo tape I made. Now you have the opportunity to broadcast yourself however

you want, so if you want a career in media, it's pretty much up to you to create content. Whatever it is that you love to do, start making YouTube videos about it. And be prepared to be shit for a long time before you're good. I was blessed that I got the opportunity, but you don't need a radio or television station to get that practice. Just do it! It won't happen straight away, but you can build your audience.

Last time you put it out there that you like Calvin Klein fitted boxers, size 32, in case anyone wanted to send you some? Did any arrive?

No, but you know what? I still wear them! I'm thinner now, and I'm not sure which size I take. I've lost so much weight since that last interview.

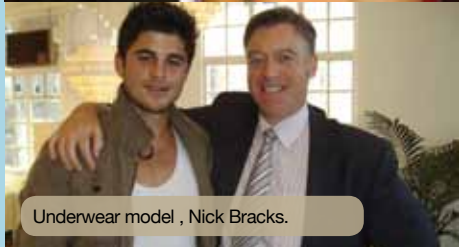
If offered, would you model underwear for Calvin Klein?

Are you shitting me? Of course! I'd go on the Mark Wahlberg mega-abs diet if I had to. I'd need a couple of months to get in shape, otherwise someone would have to be exceptionally good at Photoshop! ★

More: Visit Osher's photo blog: venicebeach600mm.tumblr.com or follow him on Twitter @oshergunsberg.



...a flirtious Craig McLachlan.



Underwear model, Nick Bracks.



Actor, Cameron Daddo.



The Bill star, Scott Maslen.



Singer and TV host, David Campbell.



Singer with Oh Mercy, Alexander Gow.

MATT'S MATES

HE'S GRILLED ACTORS AND FOOTY PLAYERS, MEDIA STARS AND STUNT MEN, NOW IT'S OUR STRAIGHT MATE QUIZ MASTER'S TURN TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS. MATTHEW MYERS LOOKS BACK AT 100 STRAIGHT MATE INTERVIEWS.

DNA: Where did the idea for the Straight Mates interviews come from?

Matthew Myers: When I was growing up in the '70s and '80s, there wasn't much support for gay people. TV and movies often portrayed gay characters as confused, sick, psychotic or they were just the comic relief. There was homophobia in schools, in religion and family life. I wanted young guys to see that straight celebrities who they often look up to are okay with them being gay. Knowing that support is out there makes a difference.

Who's been your favourite interview?

Osher Gunsberg (formerly Andrew G, *Australian Idol*) and I have had the best time yakking. He's very candid and passionate about gay rights. Ian Stenlake (actor, *Sea Patrol*) is super sweet, as are David Campbell and Craig McLachlan, who even sang *Happy Birthday* to me. I enjoyed bantering with Karl Stefanovic, cracking up with our schoolboy humour!

Do you stay in touch with any of them?

I've become great friends with Stuart Reardon (UK rugby player) and I also see Wil Anderson (comedian) and Nick Bracks (model) from time to time. I'm now friends with a few of the footballers, too. I keep in touch with Richie Branco and Dan Ewing. It's nice to know I have two former Power Rangers on call!

Who, in the media industry, do you admire?

Andrew Denton has a wonderful way of bringing out the best in people. When I interviewed him he turned the tables on me, as I knew he would. Graham Norton also puts his guests at ease effortlessly.

You often ask the Straight Mates who their diva is? Who's yours?

As a teenager I fell in love with Agnetha Fälkskog from ABBA. Barbra Streisand has the most wonderful voice. But my all-time favourite is the beautiful and esoteric Kate Bush.

Who would you turn straight for?

I've always found Halle Berry quite hot, especially in the film *Swordfish*. But then Hugh Jackman turns up shirtless and, well...

Who would be your Sexiest Man Alive from the Straight Mates?

It's hard to go past Stuart Reardon with his ripped body, and Osher Gunsberg with those beautiful eyes. I've also had a bit of a thing for Jason Hughes since he played gay Warren in *This Life*. He's absolutely charming and has the most gorgeous Welsh accent. We made a deal that if they do *This Life + 20* we'll do the interview again.

Some of the Straight Mates have come a long way since you spoke to them.

I didn't realise how much young talent I'd be interviewing, and how grateful they'd be for the exposure. I discovered I was actually helping them move on in the industry. Guys like Dan Ewing, Richie Branco, Nick Bracks, Alexander Gow, Ben Barber and Blake Worrell Thompson have all been moving onwards and upwards. I'm very proud of them.

Have many people declined the Straight Mate interview request?

Only a couple, which makes me wonder why. Maybe they aren't our mates, or maybe they aren't straight!

Or maybe the idea of being in a gay magazine is too full-on for them?

Yes, that's why I really admire the footballers who haven't been afraid to appear in DNA.

Who has surprised you the most with his answers?

Lawrence Mooney (*Dirty Laundry Live*) when he said he'd had a gay experience. He'd been to "gay world" and had a thoroughly enjoyable time! *Bondi Vet*, Dr Chris Brown, pointed out that there's gay behaviour in animals and he believes it's a case of nature over nurture. And then there was Eddie McGuire when he said he knew of gay AFL players. That stirred the pot made the front page of *The Age*.

Is there an ultimate Straight Mate you'd love to interview?

Many! George Clooney, James Franco, John Hamm from *Mad Men*, David Beckham, Prince Harry. But my ultimate would be Daniel Craig.