

Days of our Lives James Reynolds

Written by Merle Goldberg

Monday, 06 November 2006 09:05

From Kansas to Hollywood to Salem and back to Salem again!

{mosimage}James Reynolds thought that his alter ego, Police Chief Abe Carver, had finally bitten the dust as the result of being the first victim of the infamous Serial Killer storyline. No one was more surprised than he when Days of our Lives, decided it was time to bring him [back from the dead](#)

. Law and order was coming back to Salem, at last.

For over 20 years, with a few hiatuses in between, Reynolds' professional home has been on the set of Days. Now, that he's back, he feels as though he belongs to a unique and interesting fraternity – soap star resurrected!

“To a large degree I had moved on and so had the show.” The day he came back to the studio was both strange and fascinating.

“As we were introduced to the cast and crew, it was very emotional, raw emotions on the set, for the first time. It was very touching and something that I still hold close.” He never imagined how dear all those people were to him. “That intimacy that creeps up on you and you don't even know it.” It took going away and coming back to discover that his professional home was tucked away in the back lot of NBC's studios in Burbank.

Reynolds was very tied to a group of actors, he fondly refers to as the '80's bunch – Hope and Bo...you know them all. “There was real camaraderie between us. Than we all had families, life kicked in and shifted. As an actor you leave a job. You go off and do a movie, guest appearances and come home. In the case of soap actors and leaving a show, it's a death or an unwilling divorce and you must go through anger, grief and acceptance. And, then all of a sudden you're back and you're there.” Suddenly he inhabited Abe all over again, “Putting on an old familiar warm coat – that's embracing.”

Working at his craft is what moves this much-admired actor. While Abe was dead, Reynolds directed two one-acts, [“The Tangled Snarl”](#) and [“Murder Me Once,”](#) both film noir spoofs at The Fremont Center Theatre in South Pasadena -- a theatre he runs with his wife, actress, Lissa Laying. The show was both meaningful and lots of fun. But directing wasn't enough. He developed and produced, “

[National Pastime](#)

,” a play profiling the immortal baseball legend, Jackie Robinson. The best part, Reynolds' son, Jed, put on the baseball uniform to great acclaim. The family affair continues in front of the foot lights. Later this summer, his wife, will star in “Joanna's Husband, David's Wife.”

Acting isn't the only thing that keeps the Reynolds clan together. [They love basketball](#) – all of them. Reynolds coaches his wife and her all-female team. Jed coaches teens in the South Pasadena area. Both father and son have got the magic formula. They always produce

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winners! Reynolds' love of basketball goes back to his hometown of Oskaloosa, Kansas. Even now you can't pry him away from the television set when his beloved Kansas Jay Hawks are chasing the ball down the court.

Even though he's a long way from Oskaloosa, it's never far from his thoughts. "I'm back there for the Annual Jefferson County Health Office Fundraiser. They had been very helpful to my mother."

He wanted to give something back and continues to do it in the best way he knows how – on stage. "It's just a fun Sunday afternoon, 'James Reynolds and Friends.'" Lissa joins him for a round of comedy sketches and songs with old musician friends. After the performance everyone gets together for a big party to celebrate the show and the Jefferson County Health Office.

Reynolds is also a history buff and lends his support to the Kansas State Historical Society by serving on the board. He's working on a fundraiser and a book of war letters from Kansas' men and women dating back to territorial times. This project is extremely important to Reynolds. Both a history buff and a Viet Nam vet, Reynolds is planning to perform the letters as a play. More details will be available as the performance date approaches.

Reynolds still serves his country, but in the way he knows best, as a member of the USO. He started an [educational program](#) and he went to Germany to talk to kids of military personnel in an innovative educational program, where he stresses the importance of remaining in school and going to college. The USO has taken him all over the world, and given him the opportunity to get acquainted with cultures from here Kansas to all of the Stans! A soldier once asked him, "What's the difference between the wars?" His response, "E-mail. It's still dirty and the feelings are all the same. Warfare doesn't change that quickly."

But life on DOOL has been a real whirlwind ever since he stepped back on the sound stage. Reynolds' was showered with honors and nominations over the last year. His peers graced him with him an Emmy nomination as Best Supporting Actor and the NAACP bestowed him with their very prestigious Image Award. Reynolds writes down his goals and is constantly renewing them. His wish list includes another Emmy nomination and a win, not only for himself but also for Days, his home away from home since 1981.

His return and his storyline have given him everything an actor could hope for. How does he explain Abe's reaction to Lexie's infidelity? "It was too much to bare and exploding was the only option he had. The anger is now cold, as opposed to hot. And, he sees no way to reconcile with Lexie. This was not the first time she cheated on him and it made it much more difficult. He questioned her love and commitment for him. To get back with her would be a real

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struggle.”

In terms of drama, Reynolds would like to see this go on and on. He believes it reflects the way people move through their lives. As to where the storyline is headed, you'll have to ask the writers. He just studies the pages, memorizes his lines, and gives the best performance he can. Like the rest of us, he's waiting to find out what happens next!

For more information about the Fremont Centre Theatre at 1000 Fremont Ave. S. Pasadena, California, please call 626 441 5977 or visit www.fremontcentretheatre.com