

Heroes Among Us

Adrian Pasdar in the NBC hit series, *Heroes*

Adrian Pasdar arrives to the lobby of the Chateau Marmont to meet me for lunch and a quick chat before his photo shoot next door at the newly redone Bar Marmont. What you notice immediately is his strong aura, his confidence and elegance so intriguingly inviting, his whole demeanor so devastatingly masculine, you feel like you are in the presence of the real James Bond. Adding to the mystique is his charm while looking dangerously handsome in a killer black suit that makes it seem he has just stepped out of a designer boutique in Paris. You do not see this kind of elegance in Hollywood every day.

But Adrian Pasdar is not James Bond. He is a Westside family man, happily married enjoying the role of daddy to his two sons: Jackson, age 5 and Beckett, age 2 while being a devoted husband to his beautiful wife Natalie Maines, lead singer of the Dixie Chicks. "We are a tight family," he says, "we spend as much time together as possible." Adrian Pasdar is a hero to more than his family; he is one of the lead characters playing a politician, Nathan Petrelli, on the new hit series *Heroes*, recently nominated for a Golden Globe award.

Ordering French fries for lunch, Adrian explains that he is a boxer and a runner in training – currently preparing for the Las Vegas marathon, his first, so he needs the carbs. He runs every day, including a full 18 miles two days a week.

Not bad for a guy who once was told he would never walk again! At age 19, Adrian was in a horrifying car accident where his jeep rolled 7 times and he was thrown from the vehicle. Frightening, but the throw was a true blessing nevertheless as the steering wheel came off and the steering column went straight through the driver's seat. Adrian's first experience at being a hero was to be a hero for himself when doctors told him he would never walk again. At the time, he had a budding football career that he was forced to leave, turning to acting as an alternative

career choice and a childhood passion.

"When you're 19, it's not the end of the world," he says matter-of-factly. "I had to learn to walk again and I had the fire to make it happen." Adrian's philosophy is simple, "When you're faced with a challenge, you use the tools that you learned as a child. We never had any money growing up, but we had a lot of love and a lot of spirit. My parents taught me that if you see something clearly in your head, you can make it happen."

This philosophy has served him well. Adrian auditioned for *Top Gun* with Tom Cruise and the director was so impressed, the role of Chipper was written specifically for him. That was his very first film, before he realized that a blockbuster could jumpstart a career, which has now spanned two successful decades.

Heroes was already filming on the crisp morning Adrian read for Dennis Hammer, just a stop on his way to another audition. He had jumped ahead of two other hopefuls in the waiting area and his phone rang before he even got back to his car. The final addition to the cast, he was brought up to speed quickly.

"Creator, Tim Kring, had a very clear vision of what he wanted to do and he was able to convey that to every actor," he says.

"My job is simple because the writing is good. A lot of times, they want you to bring more to a character than there is... *Heroes* is the opposite: Say the words, hit the mark, tie your tie and look the other actors in the eye. It's written so well. The cast is very supportive of one another. Collectively we're all striving for the

same purpose, the same goal, but in very different ways. The character of Nathan is not like any other. And that's one of the appeals for me."

But *Heroes* is not the only thing on Adrian's mind these days, "I have a lot of projects I'd like to get off the ground," says the two time director for short film, *Beyond Belief* and the feature, *Cement*. He got some dramas he'd like to develop and a movie script he's written to produce sometime in the next couple of years.

"After you've worked in this business long enough, you get a sense you could do it differently, or better. The only way to really know is to give it a try. Take control of the project and steer it."

For relaxation, Adrian sails his 2006 Jeanneau, kept in Marina Del Rey. "Often I sail alone to Catalina and with my family up to Paradise Cove." Ever determined, he plans to sail, single handed, to Tahiti in the spring of 2008. "My dream is to sail around the world with my two sons, when they are old enough."

And my dream is to interview him again after such trip but until then we will be seeing our westside hero in *Heroes* every Monday night on NBC.

