Worse Things He Could Do

Greg Louganis breaks into acting

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Olympic Gold Medalist Greg Louganis settled into his seat on the New York City subway last fall on his way to perform in the Off-Broadway show and former Dan Butler vehicle *The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me...*, and quickly fell into rapt thought. Shaking his head and laughing to himself, Louganis reflected on the year gone by and his incredible journey of coming out to the nation as a gay man with AIDS. “It’s been the most extraordinary year of my life,” he says. “It’s been my biggest year of growth and acceptance.”

After concluding a six-week stint in *The Only Thing*, Louganis went on a national speaking tour discussing his battle with the twin closets of his sexual orientation and HIV status (as well as promoting his bio, *Breaking the Surface*).

Now Louganis is ready for more acting, encouraged by the support of friends like his University of Miami classmate Dawnn Lewis (*A Different World*). “She said, ’Greg, as long as I’ve known you, you’ve always wanted to be an actor.’” But timing is everything. “I couldn’t give the book tour up because that’s real money,” he says. “Off-Broadway you are not going to make enough to meet your expenses.”

So far acting offers haven’t poured in, but Louganis suspects it has less to do with AIDSphobia than with the simple fact he doesn’t have an agent. “That’s not normal,” he says. “I think that if I did have an agent I would have more submissions.”

He also knows he has to take care of his health first, something that made him think hard before accepting the Butler play. “I thought, what’s the worse that could happen? I could get sick during the run and not be able to finish it. Is somebody going to fault me for trying?”

Meanwhile, producer Scott Allyn was warned against casting someone with AIDS in the show. “People were telling him, ’You’re nuts. You’d better get insurance,’” Louganis says. Allyn remained steadfast in his choice, and the show went on.

Next year, Butler will take the show to London, while Louganis may travel to Chicago, Sydney or Toronto with it. “I had my trepidations because the show is so physically demanding, but I’m looking forward to doing it again. It was exhausting,” he says. “But it was more exhilarating.”

Meanwhile, a movie version of *Breaking the Surface* is in the works for the USA cable network. While Louganis will not play himself in the movie, he wants to be the body double for the actor playing him in the diving scenes.

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