

Q&A with Ned Hibberd

Fox News at Nine reporter says his most important job is being a dad

By Jen Petty

Fox News at Nine Reporter Ned Hibberd has followed news stories all over Houston, but has made his home in Sugar Land for the past six years. He shares his take on life, Sugar Land living, news reporting, and his most important job of being a father.

Ned and Danielle enjoy raising their three boys in Sugar Land



Tell us about your family.

Danielle is my lovely and energetic wife. Interesting fact: She represented Sugar Land in the Mrs. Texas pageant in 2005. Danielle does an amazing job nurturing our three sons, Teddy who's almost 4, and our twins, Michael and Alexander, who are 7 months old. She is incredibly patient with our children. That's a skill I'm working hard to acquire.

How did you meet Danielle?

She was an associate producer here at Fox 26 News. We locked eyes over the cubicles, in the bluish glow of 100 TV monitors. We got to know each other slowly and started dating. It was about then Danielle decided the TV news business wasn't her style and she left to become a second grade teacher.

What brought you to Sugar Land?

We were planning on having kids, (I guess we succeeded on that, we've got three!) so the schools were a draw. At the time, after two decades in Houston, I had never lived outside the loop. We looked inside Loop 610 first, but home prices were much more reasonable in Sugar Land, so that's where we ended up buying.

What do you like most about the area?

It's family-oriented. We take our preschooler to blow off some steam at Stomping Grounds or Town Square, where he can run up and down the stairs of city hall to his heart's content. There are parks and playgrounds within walking distance of our home and mostly all of our neighbors have children, so pretty much everyone is kid-sensitive.

How did you get into broadcast journalism?

The wrong way! I always loved the television part, first and foremost. In high school, I worked for our local cable TV company as a producer and director of local origination programming. After graduating from Rice University, I took an internship at Fox 26, which at the time did about an hour and a half of news on weekdays. Now we do seven and a half. After a short stint working for a federal judge, I returned to Fox 26 as a camera operator and floor director. Before long, I'd migrated to the news department, where I served as assignment editor, associate producer, and finally, reporter. It was really the long way around the barn.

Describe a typical day of work.

There's no such thing! We start our day with an editorial meeting, but even before that, I will have been beating the bushes, looking for compelling local stories. In the meeting, it's decided what we plan on covering for the day, and then it's off to the races. By the time Fox 26 News at Nine hits the airwaves, I will have researched the story and, along with my assigned photographer, gathered interviews with the pertinent people. I'll write a script and the photographer will edit all the video. Then, we'll usually "front" the story in a live shot. It's like researching, shooting, writing, and editing a mini-documentary within about seven hours, every day.

What do you like most about your job?

People talk about seeing how the other half lives. I get to see how both other halves live. I've been inside the glittering homes of multi-millionaires and the roach-infested apartments of people who were about to be evicted - and everything in between.

What do you like least about your day?

People seem to think reporters are chomping at the bit to interview the grieving widow or the family member who's just lost a loved one in the most horrifying way. I think this stereotype is perpetuated by the movies. That's my least favorite part of the job. We are asking these folks to open up to us on what may be the worst day of their lives. Surprisingly, many of them find the strength to do it. I don't know how. For some, I think it's truly therapeutic to talk about their loss.

TV news is great, but being a father is my most important job. It can also be the most difficult job in the world, after motherhood, of course!

— Ned Hibberd



What do you do when you aren't on the job?

A: Spending time with my family is top on the list. I play drums - when Teddy's not using the drum set! Relaxation is key. My day job is so stressful, that I've got to allow time to unwind.

What stories have had the most impact on you?

There are so many. However, one particularly stands out to me. I did a story about a guy who was jailed on a rape charge, when even the prosecutor admitted this guy didn't do it. Everyone agreed it was an honest-to-God case of mistaken identity. But this poor fellow happened to be on parole at the time and the mere fact that he'd been rearrested meant he was about to be revoked and sent back to prison. The day after we aired our story, they let him out of jail. He'd missed the birth of his first child while behind bars.

Do you have any hobbies?

Drumming, listening to progressive rock music, and I must confess, an addiction to watching Forensic Files on TruTV.

What's one thing few people know about you?

Well, in high school I was voted class clown. Hard to believe, huh?

What do you want your children to know about you?

TV news is great, but being a father is my most important job. It can also be the most difficult job in the world, after motherhood, of course! I wish my own father were still alive, so I could thank him. If there is an interesting Sugar Land resident you'd like to read more about, email editor@sugarlandmagazine.com. **SLM**