

LIVE YOUR LIFE



David Tetlow had been portraying Dr. David Hammond on *Live Your Life*, a daytime soap opera, for thirty years. More than that, he had quite literally become his character. Affecting an authority on medical matters, he called his relatives each year and reminded them to get flu shots. Whenever he boarded an airplane, he carried a copy of *The New England Journal of Medicine*. He watched medical information shows on cable television, gravely nodding his head as a disease was explained, concurring with the prognosis. David was meticulously groomed, the cuticles on his fingernails never visible, the edges of the nails hygienically short. He ate a balanced diet and took brisk walks about Bayfinch, his hometown in upstate New York, an hour's drive from the soap's Manhattan studio.

His education had not included medical school, college, or even much elementary science to speak of. He graduated from Sycamore High School in Dayton where he had dabbled in the drama club, playing the role of the doctor in *Our Town*. But the theater teacher, Miss Scummer, thought he had a classic profile, chiseled Gregory Peckish features, and a voice that could fill Sycamore High's auditorium. It was the only encouragement he'd gotten from any teacher, and he headed for New York a few days after graduation. He had trouble getting auditions and hid his nerves by acting overly confident at the few he went to. He did voice ads on the radio for several years before finally landing a role on *Live Your Life*, at the time a fledgling soap. Playing Dr. Hammond gave him, he felt, hard-earned respect. He didn't realize how hungry he was for it after years of rejection until he put a stethoscope around his neck for the first time, feeling the metal tubes solid and official against his skin. When people asked him where he studied, he assumed they meant medical rather than drama school, and answered evasively "Ohio." He scoffed at younger actors arriving in New York with drama degrees from