

Christopher Daniels Interview

Interview with "The Fallen Angel" Christopher Daniels

By [Eric Cohen](#), About.com



Daniels

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Just a few days prior to [Sacifice 2009](#), I had the opportunity to interview [Daniels](#). Daniels has been a part of TNA since almost the beginning and is one of the wrestlers responsible for their growth from a PPV-only entity to a company with a prime-time television deal. He has been involved in some of the greatest feuds in TNA history including the tag team war between Triple X and America's Most Wanted as well as a great three-man feud over the X Division Championship between himself, AJ Styles, and Samoa Joe.

To follow Daniels and the rest of the TNA stars, tune into Spike TV every Thursday night at 9:00 PM ET/PT to watch their weekly program, *TNA:iMPACT!*. In addition, you should also check out [TNAWrestling.com](#) for the latest info on the company, deals on TNA merchandise, and to watch some of their cool video features.

Eric: *Sacrifice* is being held on Sunday night and you are still not announced as having a match for the show? I was wondering if you could tell me who you will be fighting or are you going to make me wait until tomorrow night to find out on *TNA:iMPACT!*?

Daniels: You'll have to wait until tomorrow. I have an idea of what I'm going to be doing but I don't want to give it away.

Eric: But, you're definitely going to be on the show, right?

Daniels: Oh yeah. There have been a couple of things kicked around so that's why I don't want to say one-way or the other because it could be a couple of different things.

Eric: A sizable chunk of my audience has never ordered a TNA PPV. What can fans ordering a TNA PPV event expect to see in comparison to a WWE PPV event?

Daniels: Well, I can tell you there is definitely going to be a lot more action. We pride ourselves on being the best athletes in the world, the best wrestlers in the world. You're going to see something for everybody. There's going to be tag team action. There's going to be X Division action. There is going to be heavyweight guys. So I think there is something for everybody, more than the WWE would be.

Eric: You are now being referred to as just Daniels instead of "The Fallen Angel" Christopher Daniels. Why was the change made and how will this name change impact your character?

Daniels: It's not going to impact me at all. I'm still the same guy going out there and wrestling the best match I can every time I get into the ring. As far as why, that's nothing I really want to get into to be honest with you. That is something that was decided. It really didn't matter what they called me as long as I go out there and get an opportunity to excel and climb the ladder.

Eric: You've been with TNA since almost the beginning. When you started with them did you envision they would be where they are today?

Daniels: I trusted they were going to succeed. Early on, there was a lot of scuttlebutt that we weren't going to last more than a year. Here it is, almost seven years later, and we're doing well, making strides forward. I always thought we had the opportunity to succeed. It's just a matter of us taking small steps forward rather than trying to do too much at once. We went from the Wednesday PPVs to Fox Sports Net to Spike TV. We started there on Saturdays, moved to Thursdays, and then moved to prime time and then moved to two hours. So like I said, it has been slowly but surely. But it has always been steps forward. I feel that every time we have taken a step we have succeeded in taking that step and capitalizing on that forward momentum.

Eric: One of the biggest visible changes in TNA has been to the ring. How difficult was it to make the transition from a 4-sided ring to a 6-sided ring?

Daniels: It wasn't too hard. The toughest part was being on the top rope, just because of the angles of the ropes. It is so much different than a 90 degree angle. It only took me one or two matches to get that under my belt. But everything else was the same. The ropes are tight. The mat is hard. So the rest of it was just basic stuff.

Eric: While in TNA, you have won tag team gold with Triple X and with AJ Styles. In addition, you are a former X Division champion. I was wondering whether you prefer wrestling as part of a tag team or wrestling solo?

Daniels: You know, I like being in singles to be honest with you. However, when the opportunity comes to be in a tag team I give it 100%. Whenever I was tagging with AJ or with Elix, my main focus was doing what was best for the team. When you are in a team situation, you sort of have to take a step back as far as what you want to do as an individual and do what is best for the unit as a whole. I'm not one to try and take command of the team rather than bring us both together, bring us both forward as the front men. But honestly, I do like singles. I'd rather pursue singles on my own. The only goal I haven't achieved in TNA is that Heavyweight Title. That's what I'm aiming for.

Eric: The question I am asked most about is [how to become a professional wrestler](#). What advice would you give to someone that was thinking about becoming a wrestler?

Daniels: Just understand that it is a massive undertaking and you're only going to get out of it what you put into it. When I started my training, I was at my wrestling school four days a week, two or three hours at a time. I wrestled as many different people as I could to become comfortable with my own skills in the ring and to be able to adapt to the people that I wrestled. Once I started wrestling matches, I tried to work for as many different promoters as I could, against as many different opponents that I could just to get that experience. You're never going to exceed if you stay within your comfort zone. I tell independent wrestlers all the time you've got to branch out and get away from the home base and go out there and take that leap of faith and try to get your name out there because that is the only way you are going to do it.

Eric: From the tone of the emails I receive, it appears many people are under the illusion that after graduating from wrestling school that they will be immediately picked up by a major wrestling company. Could you explain to me your path from wrestling school to being a star in TNA?

Daniels: I was basically just a hobby wrestler, what I like to call a weekend guy. I wrestled like one or twice a month for a good five years. I mean between small, successful things like when I went to Puerto Rico in '95, it wasn't until '99, which was six years in where I started wrestling more of a full schedule. It was the middle of '99 when I became full time and from '99 until 2002, I was basically just beating the pavement trying to get independent promoters to book me. I was always filling my schedule, my empty dates, with independent wrestling and/or tours overseas. It was very difficult. I didn't know a month from now where I'd be wrestling. Sometimes I booked shows the week before. It was very unstable. I was very fortunate to be booked as often as I was. I realize now, especially in this climate, how hard it is in independent wrestling to keep a full-time schedule. You've just got to knock on doors, make calls, just hustle to get booked. It wasn't until 2002 that TNA came along and I got the full-time gig with them.

Eric: On my site, I have [a photo of you at the premiere of *The Wrestler*](#). What did you think of the movie and did it fairly portray the independent wrestling scene?

Daniels: It think it had aspects of reality. I don't think it was 100% accurate. I think they took a situation and sort of exaggerated it slightly for dramatic effect. But I thought there were certain aspects of it that were spot-on. I tell people that you can enjoy the movie if you look at it as just the story of that one man rather than attribute the whole movie to what pro wrestling is like today. That was one man's travels and I didn't think it was 100% realistic the way he was portrayed in terms of the path of his career. But at the same time, there were details that kind of spoke out to me as a professional wrestler, as someone who had come up through the ranks of independent wrestling, who like I said was hustling for work for a long time. That's what I took away from it. There were parts of it that I felt were a little bit exaggerated to hype it up for dramatic affect.

Eric: Just out of curiosity, what parts did you think were spot-on and what parts did you think were overly dramatized?

Daniels: For example, if Mickey Rourke's character had been as high up as had been, and they made it seem like he had been a *WrestleMania* main-eventer, then for him to go to a CZW atmosphere and subject himself to the hardcore match he had with Necro Butcher, I couldn't think of any veteran in the business today that would do the same thing having had the same stardom in the past. I don't think that, and I'm not going to name any names, that any of those guys that had been in *WrestleMania* and are still making their money on the independent scene now would ever have put themselves through what Mickey Rourke's character put himself through. So I thought that was a little dramatized.

The things that kind of spoke to me were the scenes where Mickey Rourke was at work. Sometimes when you are at work you are the center of attention and having a good time. Then sometimes work sucks and you flip out. You don't necessarily stick your hand in a deli slicer and storm out screaming but sometimes work is drudgery. I remember when I had a full-time job and I was wrestling on the weekends that I couldn't wait for 5:01 to come around so I could go to the gym or watch wrestling tapes, or do whatever I had to do to further my wrestling career knowing that the job was just a paycheck.

Eric: Is there anything else you would like my readers to know?

Daniels: Keep watching *TNA: iMPACT!* on Spike TV at 9:00 Eastern. Stay in touch with the website TNAwrestling.com. *Sacrifice* is coming up this Sunday and then next month, the 7-year anniversary, *Slammiversary* is in Detroit. Just keep your eye on me. I plan to be in a high-profile match not just on Sunday but also at *Slammiversary*. Just stay tuned man, onwards and upwards for Daniels.