

my city: joburg

# Derek Watts

**I am ...** a restless Sagittarian who's always looking for something new.

**Where were you born?**

Hillbrow. We moved to Bulawayo when I was about five. I grew up in Bulawayo, which has got the widest streets in the world.

**Where do you live?** Bryanston

**Who do you share your house with?**

My wife, Belinda, my son, Tyrone, who is 19 and my daughter, Kirstin, 17. But to be honest, the main character in the house is Gucci, my wife's miniature Yorky dog. Everybody comes second to Gucci. We have another dog called Coco, but everybody bows down to Gucci.

**How did you get into your career?**

I started in journalism as a writer for The Herald in Zimbabwe. The television side started when I joined TV news back in the bad old days at SABC. When M-Net was only two years old they were starting a new show and they asked Ruda (Landman) and me to come and present it. I thought about it for 10 seconds and crossed the floor. That was 22 years ago.

**What do you think of Zimbabwe now?**

It seems the country is picking up after the currency change. I agree that Uncle Bob has to go, but I think the key to a long-term future is a



new-broom policy. His cabinet is too well stocked with megalomaniacs, warlords and diamond hunters with no empathy for their fellow citizens.

**What would you say to people who think Carte Blanche is a very negative programme?**

I think Carte Blanche reflects what is going on below the surface of our nation. If that is depressing, then it does not augur well for our future.

I hope we are playing a part in highlighting the corruption that threatens to destroy our vibrant country.

**I've recently joined Twitter ...**

I'm getting with this new generation and I'm enjoying getting my tweets out. I've decided not to go on Facebook because it's too much admin.

**You've been with Carte Blanche since its inception. What makes you stay?**

In the media in this country there's no other job I'd swap it for. Because I don't think anything could be as exciting or offer the variety that I enjoy.

**What has been the most memorable episode in your time during the show?**

I went to Russia, to Star City, where Mark Shuttleworth was training for space and I went on the apparatus they use to train astronauts.

Then I flew with Mark to Kazakhstan where we were in quarantine for a week with those Russian generals who get drunk from about seven in the morning. I don't know how they get anything into space because they're intoxicated all the time.

Anyway, Mark took off in his little tin can and I came back and sat in our studio. He was passing overhead in the International Space Station and we were seeing a picture of him floating. I was sitting next to Madiba, who was in awe of what was happening. He was looking at that picture of Mark in space and chatting to him, and you could see he was affected by the technology.

**What's your greatest extravagance?**

Island holidays. I love going to the Maldives to the Banyan Tree hotel. It's so exotic. It's on a little island and every morning you wake up and swim around the island. You wake up in your little chalet and you just trot off to the beach. My whole family loves to swim around the island and we see wonderful marine life. Then we go straight for breakfast on the beach. It's magic.

**What's your most treasured possession?**

Family photo albums and videos.

**I'm predisposed to ...** lying in the sun on beaches, playing squash and reading biographies. And Johnny Walker Black and Coke.

**What's the ugliest thing about Joburg?** The feeling you get at traffic lights when you see children begging.

**What are the most memorable moments you've had in Joburg?** The birth of

my two children.

**How do you get around?** Mercedes E240. It's six years old and probably the slowest car on the road.

**I can't go a day without ...**

doing two headstands. If I don't wake up in the morning and do a headstand, I don't function. And if I don't do one before going to bed, I won't fall asleep. I have been doing them from the about the age of eight. At home I now have a back swing machine. And flossing. I would go crazy if I didn't.

**If you inherited R100-million, what would you do with it?**

First would be a Porsche Panamera and after that I'd buy myself a little island somewhere. And like the beauty queens say, I would give to charity. I'd give some money to my daughter's charity. She's got her charity called the Kirsty Watts Foundation, "Kids helping kids".

**What do you listen to in your car?** Radio 5, Highveld. I love the music my kids play so I love Lady Gaga, Beyoncé and Rihanna when she's not moaning about men.

**If your house caught fire what would you save?** I have to say Gucci, because it would be the end of my marriage if I didn't say Gucci. So rescuing Gucci from the flames would be my huge thing.

**What are you reading?**

*Open* by Andre Agassi. It's a biography and so sensitive and honest.

**Perfect happiness is:** A healthy family. We went through a tough time with Kirstin who had a brain tumour and went through chemo, but she's doing great and now she's a typical teenager.

**I met my partner ...** at the pet food section of Pick n Pay in Benmore. She was looking for food for her cat and I had picked up a stray dog in the Magaliesburg. We've been married 21 years.

**If money could buy happiness ...** it doesn't. You can certainly be unhappy in lavish comfort. — Ziphezinhle Msimango



Journalist, Carte Blanche anchor and dog lover



## loves&hates

**Fresh fruit juice:** I try to look after my health. I know what I should eat, but I have bad willpower. When I have a glass of fruit juice I think I'm on the right track — even if it only lasts for five minutes.

**Great movies:** These days there are very few good movies. The last I enjoyed was *Invictus*.

**A stimulating book:** I don't read fiction so a stimulating book to me would be like *Freakonomics* or a biography. I love biographies.

**Winning a tough five-setter on the squash court:** To win 17-15 in the fifth game of a match and collapse in the corner, drenched in sweat trying to catch your breath is an amazing feeling. In our little world it's like winning a major.

**Getting a hole in one:** I have never done it and it remains elusive.

**Catching a perfect wave:** It is the hugest thing on the beach.

**Chivas Regal adverts:** They are possibly my worst thing at the moment. Their whole thing is about being "so for the brothers" and "for the top echelon". I think it's spreading the wrong message.

**People who drive in the fast lane at 40km:** I don't think I'm a really fast driver but people who do this get my blood boiling.

**Arrogance:** I cannot handle this in anybody. I don't think anybody is any better or worse than the next person. For people even to have the notion that they are better than anybody else upsets me.

**Megalomania:** It's the most tragic waste of resources.

**Being ignored:** By anybody in a conversation. I suppose it goes back to my school days, when I wasn't selected for the teams.

## LITTLE BLACK BOOK

**Bice Restaurant, Hyde Park**

011 341 8080

It's a traditional Italian restaurant that is out of this world. It has family dining where you can have 14 courses, but still leave without feeling like you have eaten too much.

**Virgin Active, Sandton**

011 883 4633

I play squash there three times week. I play with a bunch of guys and we get locked into long battles on the court.

**Bryanston**

**Jewellers, Bryanston shopping centre**  
011 463 3172



It's a wonderful family jewellery store. They specialise in Breitling watches — which I love — and they have a huge range.

**The Eastern Corner, Posthouse Link Centre, Bryanston**

011 706 6003

It's run by two Chinese women, Linda and Jenny. Daniel is the chef cutting the sushi. Linda and Jenny will fuss around you, telling you how lovely you are. It's a most

humble place, with the most wonderful food.

**The Baron, Bryanston**

011 706 6373

It's in the same centre as The Eastern Corner. It's our party spot of note, but we usually sneak off after a few drinks to have some sushi at Eastern Corner. I usually go there with Peter G, who is our family dentist and also a bit of a party animal.