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Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie's lives away from Heated Rivalry – including normal jobs before superstardom

Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie have captured the world's imaginations thanks to their breakout roles as Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov – here's all you need to know about the pair

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Heated Rivalry finally landed on Sky and Now TV in the UK on 10 January after it took the world by storm following its release in Canada and the United States back in November.

Since it landed, the show has been a major hit for networks. Heated Rivalry became 2026's most watched original series in history, with viewership increasing by 400% from its initial seven-day streaming window, while HBO revealed that the show is the second driver of first-time viewers to their platform.

Reception to the series has been overwhelmingly positive, with clips from the show dominating social media. The fifth episode, I'll Believe in Anything, became the second TV episode to achieve perfect ranking on IMDB. The only previous episode to receive this honour was Breaking Bad's Ozymandias, which aired 12 years ago in 2013.

The show is led by Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie, who play hockey players Shane Hollder and Ilya Rozanov respectively. After meeting the former before their rookie season, the pair embark on a secret affair that lasts years, hiding their romance due to prevailing homophobia in the world of professional hockey.

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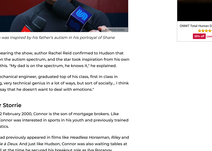
The pair have been the breakout stars of the show, with both of their social media accounts jumping from just a few thousand followers to well over a million in the weeks that followed the release of the series.

Scroll down to find out all you need to know about the pair, and their lives away from the screen...

Hudson Williams

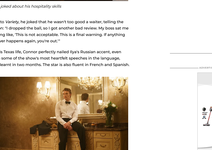
Born on 13 February 2001, Hudson is the son of a mechanical engineer and interior designer, and in his youth pursued sports, playing basketball and competing in mixed martial arts.

Before appearing in Heated Rivalry, Hudson had minor parts in several short films and had also appeared in episodes of Kidpanic and Tracker. Before being cast in Heated Rivalry the 24-year-old was working as a waiter at The Old Spaghetti Factory in New Westminster, British Columbia.


Hudson was a waiter before landing the role of Shane Hollander

Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter about his previous job, he said: "I loved it. That was how I paid my rent. It was paycheque to paycheque. Vancouver is more expensive than Los Angeles, so it was very hard. I had a great support in a lot of ways, it was a lot easier than what it's like now."

Speaking about dealing with the fame he told the publication in the same interview: "I don't want to make any assumptions, so I'm just trying to be as calm as I can. But so far, the fan reactions are very nice and mostly wholesome. [I'm] overwhelmed, over-scrolling on the socials, so I delete them lots. Every time I post something, I go and delete it again."


Hudson was inspired by his father's autism in his portrayal of Shane

While appearing the show, author Rachel Reid confirmed to Hudson that Shane is on the autism spectrum, and the star took inspiration from his own father for this. He said of the show's character, he explained:

"He's a mechanical engineer, graduated top of his class, first in class in everything, very technical genius in a lot of ways, but sort of socially... I think he would say that he doesn't want to deal with emotions."

Connor Storrie

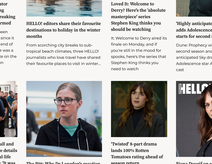
Born on 22 February 2000, Connor is the son of mortgage brokers. Like Hudson, Connor was interested in sports in his youth and previously trained in gymnastics.

The star has previously appeared in films like Inseparable Horseman, Ship and Jaxon: Fold a Deus. And just like Hudson, Connor was also waiting tables at Laurie Grill at the time he secured his breakout role as Ilya Rozanov.

Connor joked about his hospitality skills

Speaking to Variety, he joked that he wasn't too good a waiter, telling the publication: "I dropped the ball, so I got another bad review. My boss let me down, being like, 'This is not acceptable. This is a final warning.' If anything like this ever happens again, you're out."

Despite his Texas life, Connor perfectly nailed Ilya's Russian accent, even delivering some of the show's more heartfelt speeches in the language, which he learnt in two months. The star is also fluent in French and Spanish.


Connor learnt Russian for the show, perfectly nailing the accent

Speaking to Behind the Blinds about the accent, he shared: "The moment I got out of the car on set, I started speaking with the accent to all the PAs, all the ADs, hair, makeup, and wardrobe people. I stayed in it until the last cut of the day. Not because I was 'in character,' but because it gave me an hour and a half to warm up."

Sexualities

There has been plenty of discourse over the pair for playing the openly queer roles, with neither choosing to disclose their sexualities, a move that has been defended by the show's director, Jacob Tierney, who is gay, and their co-star Francois Arnaud, who is bisexual.

The pair have chosen to keep their sexuality private

Speaking to Deadline, Connor mused: "**Who I date, who I sleep with, who this, that, whatever, I'm gonna keep that to myself.** But regardless, I think this is super important, and I think also on top of that, it's just really cool."

In the same interview, Hudson added: "**You see people who infer or assume, and you kind of have to let that go.** But then again, I never wanna stop expressing the love I have for Connor physically, and I'm never really going to, and I think multiple things can be true at once."

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