

Playboy March, 1979

We broke for lunch and went to La Scala Beverly Hills. David drove us in his cherry-red Mercedes-Benz 450SL convertible, which he bought when he was 17. What stuck me about this young man, who is not yet 21 years old, is how well he seems to wear his success. On the trip to the restaurant some of the impact of his fame presented itself. As we decide to leave his office, he made a call and said, "Hey, we're headin' out to lunch." My first assumption was that he was talking to his secretary, and perhaps he was. But moments later, Larry, his 6' 4", 240 lb. body guard came in, and we were shortly joined by Jeffrey, his personal assistant who immediately started informing him of a litany of items including people who had called, including both his agent, Larissa, and his new business manager, Dwight.

When we got out of the elevator in the basement garage, there was another fellow, equally as large as Larry, another body guard name Phil. "It's all clear," Phil said, to Larry more so than to David. We were good to walk to David's Mercedes with Larry and Phil flanking us. Jeffery wasn't going to lunch with us, he was off to do business for David, but there still wasn't enough room for all four of us remaining to ride in David's car. Larry and Phil would follow us in another car. We drove up onto the street with the top down.

The drive to La Scala's was relatively uneventful, though I did note people in other cars and on the street who clearly recognized him and reacted. We were stopped at a stoplight and a couple in their mid-twenties or so, likely tourists, got very excited. The gal was jumping up and down and pointing. The guy started snapping pictures. David smiled and waved and the guy kept snapping while we could hear the gal yell, "Oh my god!" her pitch rising into falsetto.

Moments later the light changed and we were on our way. "If the light hadn't changed, that might have been a mistake," David said, "To wave. People have come up to my car in traffic before. Larry and Phil were probably back there going, 'No, dude, don't do that!'"

"That happens a lot?" I asked.

"Not all the time, but it's happened. Larry would rather be in the car with me. I told him I wanted him in the back car. He thought it was a bad idea. But, really, he can't fit in this back seat and I didn't want you to have to sit back there."

When asked why he waved if he knew it was a risk, he said, "I don't know, I guess," he pointed to the radio, where David Bowie's "Golden Years" was playing at a lowered volume, "If I was standing on a corner and Bowie drove by, I'd want him to wave. I mean, when Wings toured America a couple years ago, I went to see them at the [L.A.] Forum, and I got back stage to meet Paul McCartney. I mean, fuckin' Paul McCartney man! When I was a little kid I remember lying in bed, looking at the ceiling and wondering what he was doing at that exact moment all the way over there in England. Was he

writing a song with John? Was he recording a Beatles record? Was he eating a sandwich, taking a nap, walking his dog? So, yeah, maybe I was this bigger kid, getting famous, who was on a big TV show and I had a number one album, but it was Paul-motherfuckin'-McCartney! I was standing there talking to Paul-motherfuckin'-McCartney! I tried to be cool and all that, but I doubt I was, much. I wasn't a blubbering idiot, but I was intimidated and I know he could tell. He was cool, and told me how much he liked all the singles off *Just By Being You* and he thought I did a great job with "She Said, She Said." How much would it have sucked if he'd been a dick? So those people back there, they were fans at some level. Why be a dick to them?"

When we got to the restaurant, the bodyguard car passed in front of us to be first to stop for the valet. While Phil gave the valet their keys, Larry walked back to us to be there when we got out. We pulled up right in front of La Scala's, so it was about a 20 second walk to the front door, that's if you're not interrupted. Before we could get inside he signed two autographs and had several people call to him.

The autographs were for two teenage girls who were together. Larry and Phil were hyper vigilant while the girls were inside what I image was a safety parameter. One of girls was so incredulous that this was really happening that she just kept repeating, almost breathlessly, "Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god."

David chuckled as he took the issue of *People* she gave him, with Jaclyn Smith on the cover, and said, "So what's your name?"

She seem to have a little trouble remembering her name, "Um, um, um," she stuttered as he leafed through the magazine to find a good page to sign, "Rita!"

"Okay, Hi Rita. Where you ladies from?"

"Richmond Indiana" they answered together.

"Oh, cool. That's like less than an hour from where I grew up."

"Yeah we know, Dayton, Ohio," Rita said, "you can just sign it on the front if you want."

"Okay. Well, guess I'm gonna sign Jaclyn Smith's shoulder." The girls both giggled to themselves. "You two here on vacation?"

"No," the other said as she handed him an actual autograph book she'd pulled from her purse, a movement I noticed Larry and Phil both scrutinize on high alert. "We're cousins. Our grandpa lives here and he's really sick in the hospital."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Tell your grandpa I said I hope he makes a full recovery."

"Thanks. Oh, my names Gina."

While he signed her book she said, "We Loved you on *Grand Point* and we love your albums, too."

"Well, thank you. I really appreciate it."

He gave her book back, then Phil took a picture of him and the young women on Rita's camera. Then they practically jumped down the street, squealing, while we went inside for lunch and more direct interview.