



Mr. Personality

As most of the recent episodes of A Story A Week have dealt with my current activities, I think it's time to dip back into the grab bag of memory to see what I can come up with. And we have a good one today, about Dave the Lothario!

During the couple of years following my fairly ignominious exit from university at the end of the 60s, I found myself a bit rudderless. I still had the vague goal of becoming a classical flutist, but as there wasn't much progress being made in that field (and certainly no income), I got involved in a number of other activities. As I have written before, I made a number of classical guitars, I composed some music, and got involved with teaching music (flute and guitar).

Most of this teaching was done at the little local music shop run by my father at the time, and at some point during that period, because neither myself nor my father were particularly competent at popular guitar styles, we hired a young man who could handle the 'Rock 'n Roll' part of the teaching requirements. Mike was a bit younger than I, and a gregarious and personable young man. Whenever he was in the shop, the place was full of music, as he couldn't leave the guitars alone, and was always strumming something or other, most of the time singing along as well. He was very popular with the students and our night school classes too.

Mike's family was involved in an automotive business, and somewhere along the line, his parents had given him a car. And what a car - a fire-engine red '57 Chevy convertible - one of the most iconic cars of the era, or any era since! When he put the top down, tossed a guitar into the back seat, and drove off, you knew that he would be plenty welcome wherever he ended up. Mike and the guitar and the car meant 'instant party'!

One afternoon Mike came to me with a suggestion. He had 'scored' the address of a girl he had met somewhere, and was going to visit her place on the coming weekend, but it seemed that she was always with a good friend of hers, so he didn't want to go alone. He needed a wingman. "Dave, come on with me; we'll have a great time!"

Looking back on this now I can't imagine how he ever got the reply 'OK' out of me, but it seems that he did, because next thing I knew, there we were flying down the highway, headed for Kelowna, a lakeside resort community in the BC interior. It didn't matter to us that it was around 400 kilometers away. When you're 19 years old, and in command of a '57 Chevy, driving that distance on the off chance of getting a date isn't a bug, it's a feature!

We arrived at the address sometime in the mid afternoon, and sat in the car trying to work out what to do next. We weren't familiar with the town, but figured there must be a movie house and some restaurants, so maybe we should ask them out on a date? Mike wasn't concerned about that at all. "Let's just knock on the door and introduce ourselves. I don't think we have to worry about what comes next ... they'll have plenty of ideas, I'm sure!" And he jumps out of the car, grabs his guitar, and the two of us head up the sidewalk towards the front door.

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To tell the truth, not being exactly a young man brimming with self-confidence with women, I was totally and absolutely terrified. I had let myself be talked into the trip, and talked into actually trying to meet two complete strangers, but I was rigid with fear. What if they actually let us in? And then ... what if ...

As it turned out, I needn't have worried. The meeting at the front door must have taken all of ten seconds. I no longer remember exactly how Mike made our proposal, but they weren't having any of it, and a minute later the door closed in our faces, and we made our way back to the car.

We drove around town kind of aimlessly for a while, grabbed a burger or something, slept in the car at a lakeside park that evening, and slunk back to town in the morning.

The Chevy and the guitar will get you to the front door, but to go any further, you need some ... you know ... personality!

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