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BOB DYLAN: OUT OF SIGHT, BUT NOT OUT OF MIND

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Correspondent

Well, the clock ran out on getting someone with the Bob Dylan entourage to contact this columnist about a possible face-to-face with the singer and satellite-radio host at his Aug. 13 concert in Asbury Park. (Although we may have gotten a message through.)

Because our efforts to procure a ticket, half-hearted as they were, failed, we spent the evening cajoling various Asbury Park nobility and entertainment staff to get "a message to Dylan." We even shared the phrase, which we thought would make a great song title, with Mike "The Rocket" Wurtele, whom we found warbling just outside Convention Hall's south door.

You may recall that Wurtele is a dead ringer for a young Bruce Springsteen. Wurtele graciously acknowledged Asbury Radio's presence. We poured out our Dylan story to a video cam whose operator later offered us a ticket for the price-busting amount of \$70. It was shaping up to be one of those great Asbury Park nights after all.

But alas, Dylan's shadowy personality held true to his celebrity image, managing to exit Convention Hall behind the smoked glass windows of a white van with the enigmatic logo "CAT" printed on the side.

I watched along with Dave the Clown and rock 'n' roll artist Phillip Baker and family as the van rolled by us. Baker was hoping Dylan might roll down the window of the van and sign the black-and-white portrait he painted of his idol. Mick Jagger signed the portrait Baker had painted of him from inside a long limousine, the artist said. A security man told us that behind the new brick wall adjacent to the hall, Dylan would slip sight unseen from the van to his waiting tour bus. And so it went.

The bus slid out the narrow opening in the low brick wall and down Sunset Avenue following Bruce Springsteen, who was attending the show. Rumors flew that some of Dylan's audience began talking loudly and rudely text-messaging friends to alert them of Springsteen's imminent arrival. We wonder if Dylan was offended. Dave the Clown, who sold me possibly the smallest kite in the world, told us of other local names Dylan had bumped around with at one time or another.

As we watched, Bruuuuce waved from the driver's seat of his SUV clearly visible to fans - and none the worse for it. Dave the Clown, Baker, his children Jessica and Dylan — named for you know who — and yours truly all strained to see as the famous man fled us and fireworks boomed off the re-named Berkeley Oceanfront Hotel, their colors reflecting in the guests' windows like spirits in the night.

With him, Dylan took the secret of his identity once more. This night was not to be the great revelation of whether in fact this former Bob Zimmerman was indeed the same Bob Zimmerman who handed me one of his two devil's-food cupcakes during a short stint at my private school, Sherwood in Glen Ridge, back when he was a shy teenager. Did I say back? It would appear Dylan is still just as shy as Zimmerman ever was. Not to be found in any of the great songwriter's biographies, probably because his tenure at Sherwood was too short, the question lingers on.

Maureen Nevin Duffy created and hosted "Asbury Radio - The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public-affairs talk show at the city's WYGG, 88.1 FM station, for more than six years. Send your comments and suggestions regarding Radio Somewhere to AsburyRadio@aol.com or 3 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.
