

absolutely anyone – through a crowd without even the most rabidly desperate fans finding out!

I remember one time we got the Osmonds – all of them – out of the Churchill hotel without the world's press and mobs of fans noticing, only to have the group's management demand that we sneak them back in and bring them out of the front doors again. It was the only way they could get rid of this mob that was verging on a full scale riot and, thanks to the cameras they had set up in front to capture everything, it made good viewing on CBS news in the US! Incidentally, The Jackson 5 were staying in the same hotel at the time – but no one made a fuss because they weren't yet quite in the Osmonds' league and the two groups' famous friendly rivalry had yet to come into play.

Anyway, I got David in and out for all the four shows without a single fan sussing what we were up to – until the very last show. We'd parked an unmarked transit van outside the back of the stage and left it there all day – that way it would have been there so long without moving that no one would give it a second look. A TV crew from either the BBC or ITV was filming the show and as David left the stage they filmed his rapid escape, running backward with their cameras as he dashed down the corridors towards a discreet side exit right beside the waiting van. Incidentally, unlike some artists, who stick around for a bit of a 'meet and greet', David was always out of the venue, into a vehicle and gone like a shot. His fans were so insistent that, if he didn't get away the instant he closed the show, he'd be stuck in there for hours before there was any hope of the hysterical mob dispersing.

Anyway, on this occasion, we bundled David into the van and the camera crew bundled in behind him with all their lights and equipment and we pulled the roller shutter down behind them. The driver, deliberately, was a fairly old gent –

far from the big muscle-bound security guy they'd be expecting and anyway, we arranged for some noise to kick off at the main stage doors to create a diversion while we made our getaway. But something went wrong. Suddenly there was a deafening banging on the van's flimsy metal panels and the frenzied wailing of hysterical fans crying, 'David!! David!!! We know you're in there!!!'

It was actually quite terrifying – and it's all dramatically documented in footage shot for the programme that the TV crew were making. Oh shit, I thought, wondering how the hell they could possibly have found out. Maybe they're just taking a long shot and banging on every vehicle in sight on the off chance he's in it, I mused, completely baffled.

Then I sussed it. They had a pretty good idea all right – because the van had a fibreglass top and the camera crew's fiercely intense lights were shining out of it, lighting the whole thing up like a Christmas tree! We might as well have had a giant flashing neon sign saying DAVID'S IN HERE GIRLS – COME AND GET HIM!!!

Anyway, it wasn't a major disaster – after all, the doors were locked, so we and our star were perfectly safe and the poor girls never even got a look at him. Hindsight being 20:20, of course, it was the fact that we'd taken the TV crew with us that was the flaw in the plan. On another night, I'd slipped in with David crouching unnoticed under a coat in the footwell of an old VW. My guys were so well-rehearsed that they were expert at looking in the other direction, thereby diverting the fans' eagle eyes while we rolled casually past with the window open and I slowed down so that David could slip out and enter the venue through a side door while I drove on a little way to a separate door. The next night I used the same tactics with Gerry's little mini and cruised through with the sunroof open and no one paid me any attention whatsoever.