



A DAY WITH AN ICON. PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

On June 20th 2008 The Power Within hosted The Honorable, William Jefferson Clinton, 42nd President of The United States in oil booming country - Alberta, Canada. There were two events; the first in Edmonton for an audience of 2,000 and the second session in Calgary for an audience of 4,000. My duty was to introduce The President at both events. Greet him to the stage at the beginning, and thank him on stage at the conclusion of each talk. An opportunity of a lifetime I wish to share with you through this essay about my day, with an icon.

To fully appreciate the depth and magnitude of such an introduction, first you must examine his biography. Although not a current sitting President, Clinton is by far one of the most intriguing human beings to hear speak. Voted President in 1992 and again in 1996, Clinton was the first Democratic President to be awarded two consecutive terms in six decades. Running The William J. Clinton Foundation, Clinton Global Initiative and Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) - he has raised hundreds of millions of dollars, bringing life saving care and treatment to millions on six continents. His chief philanthropic aim is in four key areas; health care with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS,

economic empowerment, the environment and racial, ethnic and religious reconciliation. The man is simply the champion of positive change for the world, in the world.

Taking the Stage The introduction took no more than 6 minutes. Short (but felt like a lifetime), precise, but potent – The President’s introduction was truly a declaration of promises to the world that was rich with commitment, action and measurable results rather than his accolades. Following the introduction to an over-capacity crowd of 2,000, Clinton paid me an unexpected compliment.

The Compliment You cannot expect, ask for nor pray enough to see a man of this stature endorse what you are, what you do nor what you stand for. Especially in the politically charged environment he lives in. But following my introduction, The President went on to thank me and said *‘Richard is a motivational speaker, and it was he (President Clinton) that should be introducing him (Richard).’* Although I wouldn’t argue with him, I was humbled at the statement and knew I would treasure his words for life.

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A DAY WITH AN ICON

PRES. WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON,
42nd President of The United States of America

The Jet Setting to Calgary

I boarded a twin prop engine plane with the event production manager that seated 6 as The President boarded a Gulfstream private jet – housing much of his staff, Secret Service and the event organizer and friend, Salim Khoja.

Onboard, I reflected and realized this journey was beyond adventurous, it was euphoric, exhilarating and in a quiet way – very humbling.

The event ran late in Edmonton and Calgary folks were already seated. We had an hour flight ahead of us and needed to be in Calgary 30 minutes earlier. Time was tight, and we had to fly.

Cutting it Close

As if it were a scene in a movie, we were being audited for every minute. The President had reached the venue 10 minutes earlier than us and The Canadian Tenors were already performing warming the audience. With over 5,000 people in attendance, there was little room to stall for the sake of my introduction to Clinton that truly, anyone else could have done if I wasn't there on the mark, on time.

With literally 10 minutes more of a drive ahead of us, and 8 minutes to my mark – I grabbed my jacket, script and ran for it. Down the main street, passing cars, people, bicycles and babies – I ran for my life; up the escalators and to the main entrance to then be rushed to the backstage with 4 minutes to spare.

As I was ushered by backstage helpers into position, I noticed my 'All Access' pass was no longer around my neck, and in that instant, 3 secret service agents questioned my presence and purpose backstage. Still catching my breath from the run, I think they were finding it hard to believe that I was breaking the sweat from a run to backstage just to introduce The President. Just as I thought they were about to remove me, Clinton himself emerges from a doorway and acknowledged my presence and said 'glad you're here, now we can get started.' He then waived me over to say hello, which I think beat the need for credentials for security.

He chatted about a time he was in Ireland at a state dinner, and because he was running a tight schedule, he recalled the joy of the dinner and what great hosts the Irish made.

The story has no bearing really on anything. But it was the moment. He called me over to join a friendly chat about nothing, and inside the context of nothing and Clinton – there was everything.

The Final Introduction for the Day

After I introduced The President for the final time that day to a sell out audience. I was confident I did so with power and precision. When I called him to the podium to a standing ovation, he looked to me and asked 'were you still nervous?' and I responded 'I was shaking in my boots' to which he said 'good, that'll keep you on your toes'.

And, as he did in Edmonton he thanked me for the introduction but this time said something profoundly honoring. He said '*I thank Richard and for the work that he does.*'

I had – that I was truly, truly humbled and honored for the opportunity to share the stage with him, and grateful for the wonderful things he said about me and what I stood for.

The President speaks with a profound complexity that is powerful and purposeful – but everyone gets it. He provides an overview of global affairs in such a way that you get, and he even shares ideas as to how you can make a difference. No matter how large or small – everyone can contribute. He captivates everyone through his charm, wit, commitment and sincere motivation to make a difference in the world as he says '*for our children, and our children's children*'.

It really hit me hard what a powerful experience I just had when a man wearing a Stetson approached me, He said 'son, my name is Jack and I want you to know that you did one incredible job introducing that man; and you are a very, very lucky man to have done just that very job.' He concluded by saying 'many people would have killed to have had that opportunity' to which I replied – 'I did'. We both chuckled and he left, making his way into a Bentley.

In that moment I realized, that no matter what people do for a living, their vocation, and their net worth – when they are moved, touched or inspired –they appreciate it, and when they can, they will thank you. Having introduced President Clinton leaves me with many feelings. No matter what, I know now, more than ever before, I can be on any stage, with anybody, and be ok.

When you raise the bar for yourself and your life; and you meet and exceed it. There is no turning back. Left behind is the little leagues, as you enter the majors. And once playing full out at that caliber, you notice that you will never be same. You can't. You discover the *Power Within*.

Go see President Clinton October 16th in Toronto, October 17th in Victoria or Vancouver, BC; so you too can learn to...

Think rich. Give back.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

www.bydolan.com for photos, essays or information on Richard Dolan

www.clintonglobalinitiative.org for information on President Clinton's Global Initiative

www.powerwithin.com for more information on upcoming events

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