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A Dream Come True

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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"What a great day. This was probably the best day of my life. I mean this makes graduation look like a trip to the grocery store and Disney World a neighborhood carnival. Santa Claus was particularly good to me that year and allowed me to charge five tickets for the Sixers/Jazz game on her Visa. However, this was not your ordinary NBA regular season game. This was Julius "Dr. J" Erving's final trip to the Salt Palace in his great career, and my only chance to see my idol play live and in person."

Cover Page Footnote

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A DREAM COME TRUE

by Drew Mitchell

What a great day. This was probably the best day of my life. I mean this makes graduation look like a trip to the grocery store and Disney World a neighborhood carnival. Santa Claus was particularly good to me that year and allowed me to charge five tickets for the Sixers/Jazz game on her Visa. However, this was not your ordinary NBA regular season game. This was Julius "Dr. J" Erving's final trip to the Salt Palace in his great career, and my only chance to see my idol play live and in person.

We headed to Salt Lake City, Utah, on New Year's Day 1987 and settled into the Marriott that afternoon. The Sixers were already checked in and at practice in a local high school gym. The seconds seemed like minutes as I impatiently awaited the game the next evening.

Morning finally came and, being as devious as possible, I snuck into the Salt Palace to watch the Sixers practice. The Man was icing his knees on the sidelines most of the time, but he would be ready to play. After practice was over, I was able to meet Mr. Erving. He stands six feet, six inches tall, the same as me, and was wearing a very nice fur coat.

"Hello, Mr. Erving. I was wondering if you would autograph a few things for me," I said tentatively. As his hand engulfed my extended hand and firmly shook it, I felt as if I was living a dream.

"Sure," he said. "You're a pretty big guy." Being as witty as I could, not to mention that I was on cloud nine million, all I could render in response was, "Well, you're not too small yourself." Fortunately, he signed all of my memorabilia and even put his arm around me, like an old friend, for a couple of pictures. It was the darkest day of my life when I found out that the pictures did not develop and were lost forever.

"Well, I've got to take a nap before the game," Mr. Erving said.

"Thanks a lot. Thank you very much..." I probably would not have stopped thanking him, but he jumped in with a "You're very welcome."

I was simply awestruck by his presence. I looked at my cousin and sister and I even think they were impressed by his kindness and generosity, but I wasn't finished.

"Hey Doc...look for me at the game tonight. I'll be in the second row behind your bench." All the while I was showing him my Dr. J replica game jersey that I was wearing.

"O.K., see ya later," was the reply. I didn't think he would actually look for me at the game, but I sure felt good hearing it.

Following an afternoon of being recognized in public by Mr. Erving and taking on the role of "crowd control" for him, it was finally game time. Being the fanatic that I am, I was very "psyched up" for the game. Many of the 12,000+ people in the Salt Palace also knew this, including some of my friends who heard me yelling from their top row seats. I'm sure my sister, cousin and parents were embarrassed, but I was having the time of my life.

During a time-out in the second quarter, after the Sixers went on a run and extended their lead over the Jazz, I vaulted out of my seat waving my pennants and voicing my approval of the Sixers' play.

"Yeah Doc, that's a way. Alright Charles. Yeah Mo. Yeah Doc--way t'play baby." That's when it happened. As Mr. Erving was making his way to the bench, he looked directly at me, winked, and clenched his fist in approval as if to say "Keep it up kid." The loudest and most obnoxious person in the arena fell silent. Baffled and stunned, I turned to my family to see if they saw what just happened.

"Did y...Corey, Beth...did you...did you... Did you see that!?! Did you see that!?!" They both replied with a nod and a smile, trying not to associate with me. I slowly nestled into my seat gazing into the lights in the ceiling, trying to comprehend what just happened. I felt blessed and enlightened. A superstar, MY IDOL, on his farewell tour of the NBA, took time to talk to and recognize me, some crazy high school student from Idaho. The sincerity and kindness with which he spoke touched me deeply. It was a heck of a lot more than I ever dreamed of, but I now dream of it often.

Bookends

Bindings tight
weight uneven
they hold their own

thoughts scattered
muscles weakened

the new
becomes the old
and falls asunder

Nathan C. Follet