



After waiting as long as six hours, these concert-goers are about to receive their reward in the form of Fleetwood Mac concert tickets. Tickets went on sale at noon Monday.

Photo by Bob Pearson

## Mouth works but talks break down

By E. K. Casaccio

Summer jobs are hardly ever entertaining. Particularly when working a Friday night shift. And they're almost unbearable while laboring at a hotel reservation center in Omaha.

The dutiful operator sits at the computer terminal, earpiece jammed against the ear for almost audible reception waiting to answer the glutted WATS lines and type in the reservation.

One such Friday night while eating my pencil and expecting Mr. and Mrs. We-have-ten-children-and-want-to-sleep-in-the-same-room to call from I-80 USA, a Celebrity called.

Celebrity? A rather nebulous term applied to anyone from a Hinky Dinky produce manager to the twin grinners, Farrah and Jimmy.

### Space cowboy calls

My star was that space cowboy of airwaves, Steve Miller, of the Steve Miller Band.

Fortunately I was spared from star-struck stuttering into the mouthpiece, because rock 'n' roll stars often have the diction of Eliza Doolittle before Prof. Higgins happened. And Ma Bell's connections sometimes sound as if the customer's tongue had turned into a wobbly mass of gelatin.

Consequently, I didn't know it was him until the end of the conversation.

The following is a reasonable facsimile of the most entertaining call of the summer.

Operator (in computer voice): Anonymous Reservations. E.K. speaking. May I help you please?

Miller (in heavy English accent): That's a nice name. E. K. where are you?

### Traveling incognito

Operator: Omaha, Nebraska.

Miller: Omaha? That's a long way from Tampa.

Operator: Yes sir, it is. How may I help you sir? (Get to the point).

Miller: I'm with the Steve Miller Band. We have two limousines outside. We're traveling incognito. I'm here looking for James Taylor.

Operator: (Incognito? With two limousines? Is he at least wearing sunglasses?) Sir, do you need a reservation?

Miller: I'm in the Anonymous Hotel in Tampa and I want to bill it to Concerts West. I'm not drunk.

Operator: Sir, we don't handle billing. Talk to the desk clerk.

### Looking for J.T.

Miller: He told me to call you.

Operator: Why won't he give you a room?

Miller: I don't know. I'm here looking for James Taylor. He's supposed to be here.

Operator: Alright sir, we have two hotels in Tampa. Which one are you in?

Miller (to the desk clerk): Hey, where are we? (Pause) He says 1793. He says you'll know what it means.

Operator: Sir, I'm sorry neither of our locations in Tampa have that code number. Where are you?

Miller: Just a minute. (Pause) He says we're in Treasure Island.

Operator: That's in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Miller: That's right. I'm here looking for James Taylor. You know who James Taylor is, don't you?

Operator: Yes, sir. Let me talk to the desk clerk.

Clerk: Hello.

### We can handle it

Operator: Sir, is there a problem? Why won't you give this gentleman a room?

Clerk (in an announcers voice): Well, this is Mr. Steve Miller of the Steve Miller Band.

Operator: I know (remaining calm). So why won't you give him a room?

Clerk: Well, it's no problem. We can handle it here.

Miller: E.K. what's your address?

Operator: I'm not going to give you my address. (Sure Steve. Send me an album, or better yet a cadillac.)

Clerk (Sounding more like a Union Pacific Railroad commercial): We can handle it.

Operator: Goodbye. Thank you for calling.

Miller: Thank you. Goodbye.

Phone: Click

(Damn, I should have given him my address.)



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