

## **Where's Rihanna?**

### **The glamour, the glitz, and the drama: Notes from a memorable Grammy weekend**

**By Rupert Style, film producer and 2009 Grammy nominee for Rihanna's Best Long Form Video 'Good Girl Gone Bad'**

You could say things took a memorable turn from the very start. As soon as John, the tall, affable Air New Zealand concierge at Heathrow airport hears my wife and I are headed to LA to attend the Grammy Awards, he doesn't hesitate a moment to usher us into the airport lounge, recommending us as VIP guests to his equally charming colleague Jan. It turns out the charming Jan is a veteran stewardess who has flown 20 years on Concorde planes, attending countless film and music stars in the process. When I suggest she writes a book on the subject. She looks horrified at the mere thought: 'I couldn't possibly do it! ' Then she adds, wistfully: 'Too many shocking secrets, you see!'

In terms of shocking secrets, I'm sure that even for the likes of Jan, who has seen it and heard it all before, this year's Grammy's top tabloid story about Rihanna's alleged fight with boyfriend Chris Brown takes –pardon the pun- some serious beating. When I planned to attend this year's Grammy ceremony, as a nominee for Best long form video with Rihanna's DVD Good Girl Gone Bad – together with hugely talented director Paul Caslin, and executive producers John and Ruth Paveley - I looked forward not only to see her there, but to possibly even share a few drinks and celebrate with her crew, whatever the outcome. It turned out this wouldn't be the case, when just before the show is due to commence on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, a rumor starts spreading about Rihanna's possible cancellation.

We are taken aback from the possible allegations that Riahnna won't perform as scheduled due to a 'domestic accident'. Having seen her looking radiant at the pre-Grammy bash the night before, we are all rather skeptical about the news. That is until legendary Al Green appears on stage to sing his timeless hit 'Let's stay together', and instead of duetting with Rihanna as scheduled, he has to make do with serenading Justin Timberlake. My wife and I watch the rest of the performance in bemusement: though Justin does a fine job –he can actually sing, which helps – and the audience appears to enjoy it, I can't help feeling slightly confused watching the two men singing 'let's stay together' while locked in a

loving gaze. ‘So what happened to Rihanna?’ asks Simona, my wife.

The answer comes about an hour after the show, at a lovely French restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, when two ladies sitting at the table next to ours notice Simona’s stunning gown - Matthew Williamson, since you ask- and immediately guess we must come from the Grammy’s. ‘Did you hear what happened to Rihanna? Her boyfriend hit her!’ My wife and I look at each other in disbelief. Though we can hardly take these women’s word as fact, it’s hard to ignore how quickly – and consistently – the rumor of the alleged fight has spread. Having produced countless music shows myself over the years, I know stars don’t just cancel a show like the Grammy’s unless seriously prevented to take part in it. As the news of Chris Brown’s arrest is confirmed, I’m beginning to feel both sad and angry at how things have turned out for Rihanna tonight.

But I guess the show must go on, as they say, and I’m determined this is going to be a memorable night for us, whatever the outcome. Even though our Best Long Form Video award was eventually snapped by legendary Hollywood director Peter Bogdanovich for his Tom Petty film – a pretty damn good choice, I hate to admit – there are still reasons to celebrate. It’s been an amazing night for British music, with Sir Paul McCartney, Radiohead, Coldplay, Adele, Duffy and Estelle all bringing home the hardware and my dear friend Nigel Godrich, who has just won Best Alternative Album for Radiohead ‘In Rainbows’, has invited us to Radiohead’s top secret private party on the Hollywood Hills.

The top secret location is a huge Hollywood mansion complete with rock pool overlooking the city – I contemplate diving in, but luckily the pouring rain prevents me from ruining my bespoke Savile Row suit. Slowly but steadily the place fills with the A list crew, including Sir Paul McCartney, who compliments me about the work I did for him producing and editing his *Ecce Cor Meum* DVD a couple of years back. I’m definitely starting to lighten up. A few watermelon vodkas’ later the sky clears, revealing the most spectacular Hollywood views, and as Tom Yorke hits the decks, my ecstatic wife drags me to the dance floor, asking ‘Could we do it all again next year please?’ ‘Of course, darling’ I say convincingly. I must admit, I would hate to disappoint the wife.