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Tuesday, September 29, 2009

All My Catholic Best (Blessed) - My Memories of Jim Carroll 91-99

All My Catholic Best (Blessed?) - My Memories of Jim 1991-1999 That's what he wrote on the inside of my Catholic Boy CD jacket, "To Bob – All My Catholic Best (Blessed?) – Jim Carroll, Sept. 3, 1991". I think that's the date. He was getting off stage from a reading at the St. Mark's Church. I was a huge fan in awe. But I was there on business. I had recently landed a job as a booking agent at the Greater Talent Network, a lecture agency in Manhattan. Basically the job was to cold call the Muffy/Buffy types who controlled the program budget at universities and push our roster of celebrity speakers on them. At that time GTN's roster was getting stale, lots of 60s and 70s types – Tim Leary, Bobby Seale, G. Gordon Liddy. I was eager to inject some new blood (so to speak) into the roster and targeted Jim. I had set up a meeting with Jim after the show through Rosemary Carroll, Jim's lawyer and ex-wife. The two shared an odd relationship of not just mutual respect, but mutual reverence. She clearly took Jim's career and best interests very seriously. And for his part Jim worshiped her. He liked to wisecrack "Notice she never gave up my name - heh, heh - take that Danny," Taking a playful jab at Danny Goldberg, Rosemary's current husband and record industry executive. After the reading I waited my turn among the fans and then introduced myself. "Baaawb, you look a lot different than I imagined," he said in his shaky Elmer Fudd from The Bronx drawl that I would later master and mock him with. Maybe he was expecting some William Morris-type, not some rookie lecture agent in post-punk garb. During our conversation his eyes took me aback. Not looking elsewhere, but not looking anywhere either, never once making eye contact. I mentioned his stare on my follow up call to Rosemary. She dismissed it with a curt "yeah, I guess that's how he is". I ultimately suppressed my inner fan boy and we cut a deal. I was now representing Jim Carroll and I was psyched.

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