

Last word

Fake frenaisance guaranteed

Rob Garratt realises a reviewer's perks often come with a side of forgotten 'friends'

'Oh, hi... I'm great, how are you? ... Yes, it has been a long time... Yes, I am... Yes, I think it is... No, I haven't...' This is a conversation I have had up to six times on the day of a big music event in Dubai. Working as the nightlife editor of *Time Out Dubai* has brought me countless great personal and professional challenges, triumphs – and fake friends. Rarely does a big gig go by without some long lost acquaintance worming their way out of the woodwork in a bid to bag an extra ticket – and for a sold-out event, a fake frenaisance is guaranteed.

Now, I'm all for helping out a mate. Indeed, many of my closer friends have sat through forgettable concerts, repulsive restaurants and mediocre movies, all in the line of (my) duty, and if there's anything I can do to help them source entry for something they might actually enjoy, I'll gladly help. But there are friendly favours



rolling around in a bath of spare gig tickets and press passes. And when I am lucky enough to have a plus-one for my efforts, I've generally planned

out because they want to get to know me better? That they've suggested this nightlife event because they think I might enjoy it, and they'd like to connect with me?

Well, I'm about to find out – fast. As I write this, I'm entering my final week as nightlife editor on this fine magazine, and by the time you read this, I'll be entering the (equally glamorous) digital world of working on the *Time Out* website. Let's see who's still calling me out of the blue, come September.

Rob Garratt is our new web editor. He's worried he might not have any friends when he isn't one of Time Out's independent reviewers anymore.

There are friendly favours and then there's downright cheek

and then there's downright cheek. On the day of a major music event I can expect to receive emails, texts and phone calls not just from friends, but from friends of friends, work associates, vague acquaintances – and in at least two cases, people I've never actually met – all assuming I'll invite them along for backstage access.

Now, the sad reality is that while a reviewer's life comes with some perks (and access to the company credit card), it's never the case that I'm

who I'm going with before the day of the concert. Which is the part that's insulting, rather than plain rude – do all these woodwork-worming souls really think I'm so unpopular that there's no one whose surname I can remember that I might rather go with?

The worst part is, you can't always tell. I like to see the good in people, wherever possible, and it feels churlish to dismiss someone asking to spend time with you. Who am I to assume Caller A isn't simply reaching

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