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Two Brothers

"I had to do my life over, I would change every single thing I have done."

-Ray Davies

"I think things happen for a reason." -Dave Davies

It started in the front room of their mothers house when they were teenagers. Little brother Dave was thrown across the room by a great electrical force supplied by the little green amp. The house went black and all that was heard was their mother yelling and the two boys laughing hysterically. The boys were playing with instruments, Ray on piano and Dave on electric guitar. Dave, upset and dissatisfied with the sound, used a razor to scrape up the back of the amp to create a raw and different sound. This sound that he had invented with his brother would change their lives and give them a name. The Kinks were their band and they were there to change the face of music even as it stands today. Everyone has heard "You Really Got Me," either in the womb or anywhere else in the world. The Kinks are considered one of the greatest bands to ever walk the face of the earth, and the two leaders, Ray and Dave Davies, stood at the top of it all. Through all this fame and success, the brothers stood on different grounds. They both stayed completely different, which jeopardized their relationship. Their differences even pulled them closer and successful with their music. Its important to understand the differences between the brothers because it shows how a personal connection between two beings can completely go together. Their ideas, their emotions, their styles of writing,

philosophies and their histories make them two completely different people. Though they fought, they still had a certain closeness.

Their lives starting out was already a huge contrast, and because of their background it shows their life as it went on. Ray Davies grew up as the youngest and only son of six sisters and enjoyed his first three years until his brother came into the world. Ray recalls that when he saw his purple-faced newborn baby brother in his mothers arms, something had changed inside of him. He felt angry and jealous towards him, now knowing that the spotlight was no longer his. Ray developed these odd traits as a child, as every young kid does, not wanting to share and being very bitter towards his brothers birth. As he grew older, he was rather violent towards his younger brother, constantly getting in fights and shouting matches. He began to show symptoms of depression, becoming introverted and staying behind, whereas Dave still enjoyed the attention. Though he was shy and quiet, he was still controlling and jealous, it just didn't surface until he was older and the star of the Kinks (Davies, Ray, 17-35)

Dave was brought into an unsuspecting world, his mother being the only one that knew he was going to be born. He was the final child in a family of seven children, becoming the eighth and the most spoiled. Most of his life, he lived in the shadow of his brother, but was completely guarded and shadowed by the remaining sisters, some of whom had gone off to live their lives. Dave was a sensitive and curious child that just wanted to be Ray's best friend, but was constantly pushed away. Both of the brothers needed attention and constantly fought for the spotlight. Usually, he gave up the spotlight for Ray, showing that he was forgiving and laid back compared to his brother. Dave showed more of an interest for spirituality and religion whereas Ray didn't care much for

the belief system, as he created his own. He believed in reality and what he could touch (Davies, Dave, 6-17).

The two brothers continued to write together, though Ray did most of the songwriting on their albums. It was now his job and his future, always creatively constructing concepts and characters that he could portray in a song. Ray was very paranoid and many people, as well as himself, see that he may have had problems with schizophrenia. Dave wanted to help his brother and take care of his problems, but Ray couldn't let that show. Ray wrote on a level where he didn't feel like talking about himself; he made characters that he could filter through. Dave wrote about his own feelings and his spirituality, afraid and worried about his relationship with his brother. Sometimes, Ray would get so jealous of Dave's writing ability, that he would push his songs off the albums and release them as singles. In one example, Dave had written a song called "Death of a Clown," which had gone to number one in the charts in England. Ray was so outraged that none of his songs had gone to number one, that he refused to talk to Dave. Oftentimes, Dave would want to play a song on the stage, but Ray would immediately interrupt with a different song. Dave usually stayed strong, but sometimes he would lose control and strike his brother, creating a brawl rather than music on the stage.

Between the brothers, their philosophies are very different. Ray lived for a more representational life, writing about what he saw and speaking about what he wanted to see change. He also wanted to "preserve" the British spirit. He lived off his own pain, and as a manic depressive, he wrote in context of his disease. Dave continued to try and help his brother, as he felt that it was his job to hold his brother. Dave always lived off a

strong guilt complex, having split from his pregnant girlfriend at fifteen and being unable to see his child. His songs would often be written about these certain guilt issues he had, even the issues that he and his brother had. In one song, called “Strangers,” he sings about how the brothers may be different in many aspects and the fact that they are also going through the same thing, which he claims, “We are not two, we are one (Davies, Dave, 132).” Dave was also more spiritual, believing that everyone should be in the world, and one with the world. He believed in all religions, and that the cosmos was the reason for all things to happen. Ray had always been depressed and always had a reason for hating something. In one instance, Ray’s wife had suddenly left him, on his birthday, of all dates, and he really had nobody to turn to except for Dave. Ray ended up taking a handful of pills and whiskey and went on stage, claiming that “The Kinks are dead, I am dead.” He started to overdose and Dave was the one that took him to the hospital. When they arrived at the hospital, Ray was still in stage makeup, wearing a nice suit and his hair hung over his shoulders, looking a bit like a clown. Was this the person that Dave had sang about in “Death of a Clown (Davies, Ray, 393)?”

Today, the brothers have become more similar. Though the Kinks had broken up and they had gone on to solo projects, they prove that there is something missing from their lives. Their music doesn’t have that element that the other brother provided, so their new music sounds like something is off or just entirely missing. Within five months in 2005, the brothers both faced life threatening problems. Ray was shot in New Orleans, having to go through therapy to walk again, and Dave had suffered from a stroke, causing him to lose a lot of his senses. Both brothers are now fine, they still play guitar and create music. They share the same grin, the same face, but never the same opinion, and they

need that today. There's nobody to fight with and nobody to talk to. But their words will never reach their ears, as they don't talk to each other. Now, they both walk with canes, not out of being old, but risking their lives apart. They need each other, their life support, and once they connect again, they will be the brothers that the world meant them to be.



Ray and Dave Davies, 1968

Bibliography

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