

## Time with Walker Caine

Reprinted with permission by MLA Records and Walker Caine Music

The first time I wrote a band article was in 1984. It gave a huge boost to that bands' career and ever since I've received requests to do more. Now the entertainment industry may be fun and glamorous, but from a journalistic point of view it can be either exciting or irritating and mundane. I've seen writers spend short lived careers with the same article, only changing the names.

Last month I received a letter that caught my interest. It lacked the usual fanfare that accompany most requests, instead there were just four simple words: Who is Walker Caine?

I tacked it on my bulletin board and went back to work. There it stayed until several days later when, while making coffee, it came into my mind. Who is Walker Caine.

Eventually curiosity got the better of me. I did the usual Internet search and found this guy to be everywhere; he's had more publicity than most major players. I also found the name as a character in a novel, but since his name-sake is plainly written on his web site this was immediately dismissed as were a couple of unknown wannabe's using the name after him.

Now I'm confused. There is no major support behind Walker Caine, yet he seems to be everywhere. There is none of the usual spin, no "up and coming great" or "music that will blow your head off" type of nonsense. In fact, it was even more intriguing to find everything void of name-dropping and other attention grabbing tactics people like to wave in front of them.

I'll bite, who is Walker Caine...

A phone call to his label, MLA Records, just made it worse. They were very protective of Walker and not willing to give out too much information other than amusing trivia; but on the other hand, they were very willing to arrange for me to talk to him myself. Now, that was too easy. Why would an obviously recluse artist be willing to spend time with me?

The meeting was arranged. I listened to the music, read the press releases, looked at what pictures and videos I could find. Armed with this information, I prepared myself for an uneventful interview fully expecting the equivalent of a pat on the head and quick dismissal from just another egotistical musician.

Well, when I'm wrong I'm wrong. There was absolutely nothing to prepare me for the person I was about to meet.

It was a sidewalk café and I po-



sitioned myself at the best table for watching people come and go, as I wanted a first impression and didn't want to miss Walker Caine's entrance should he blend in with the crowd.

Blend in with the crowd. Impossible. Up rode a lanky fellow on a big black motorcycle,

helmet-less with shoulder length hair blowing around. He wore simply a pair of jeans, black shirt, leather jacket, and cowboy boots with chains wrapped around them.

He got off his bike and stretched, and then stood there slowly taking off his gloves while scanning the area. That struck me as odd, it was almost as if he were checking to see if it was safe to continue.

There could have been a crowd of hundreds milling around, but he stood out and commanded attention. Then I felt his eyes piercing me through his mirrored aviators.

Now I'm not easily impressed, in fact I generally don't care much for what people think of themselves, but I'm embarrassed to say I was totally tongue-tied when Walker wandered up to my table. Seeing my jaw flapping in the wind he just looked over the top of his glasses at me with a grin, and said "I'm Walker Caine. You must be Rede, I'm familiar with your work."

When he sat down and took off his aviators the shock set in. As if his strong presence and appearance weren't enough, it was then that I recognized him as one of the key speakers at a conference I covered in the early 1990's on International Management. This man before me had honorary degrees, titled and knighted. His resume reads like the Who's Who encyclopedias he was included in.

Walker Caine was not Walker Caine.

Nevertheless, he was. Watching

*Continued on page two*

Walker Caine *continued from page one*

him I felt like I was with a star in the grand old tradition. Everything fell into place in my mind; this guy is too eccentric and eclectic for common fame. He has music dating back to the mid 1970's littered with Country, Jazz, Metal, Folk, you name it. He has accomplished things most men only wish for yet remains fairly unknown. I suddenly saw this as an opportunity.

*RM: I'm a feature writer, not an interviewer; and I don't do entertainment anymore. I'm fairly unprepared as far as specific questions. You sure you want to do this?*

*WC: Why not. Let's just talk and you can work around what you get. If you're lucky there won't be a story.*

*RM: When I was doing background on you I found that you're pretty well known, why is it I've never heard of you?*

*WC: Probably the same reason people haven't heard of you.*

Ouch. My mortality was pierced

*RM: Fair enough. But your songs, they're pretty good and they all seem to tell some kind of story. Yet you don't seem like you're trying to catch on as a major artist.*

*WC: I'm not really. Most people who listen to them like them, its just getting people to listen and that's really not my department. I do like to tell stories in them, you're right, and most of them are true. I don't let myself get stuck in any genre either. I don't fit into the everyday, but when you think about it, how many of the great ones did?*

*RM: You think you're one of*

*the great ones?*

*WC: Oh hell No, but with a little help I could be good.*

*RM: Help? As in songwriting?*

*WC: Maybe, but help as in people who know what they are doing and do what they say. I've been recording off & on since 1975, I think I met one once.*

*RM: Off and on. I've seen you before you know, and it wasn't playing music.*

He smiled at that one

*WC: I know you don't do interviews, but I like the way you tell a story and figured you wouldn't like me. You tell the truth and I want people to see me through those eyes. Other people will do the interviews; you just write your story.*

Walker Caine and I continued talking. A couple of drinks loosened both of our tongues and within minutes I felt very at ease with him. He told me things which were obviously off-the-record and I told him things he can easily blackmail me with.



People kept watching us and occasionally even the ones just passing by would stop and whisper to each other before moving on. Every once in a while some

young attractive woman would walk up and ask him for his autograph or for a picture together.

I'll admit it, jealousy hit me once or twice, I hated this guy. One girl, probably 18 or 19, still sticks in my mind; "I don't know who you are but you are so cool that I just have to have a picture with you!".

It must have been all over my face because he smiled and said "Don't feel bad, no one ever comes backstage to see the writer." My sex life in a nutshell.

*RM: How do you deal with these women? You must get a lot of offers.*

*WC: (laughing) No... I mean, I could I guess, but I'm beyond that, I just soak up the attention. How many men my age have 20-year olds offering to have their baby?*

*RM: That's happened?*

*WC: Oh yeah, more than once. It's well known I have two daughters I just dolt over, they seem to think I need a son.*

It wasn't the first or last time during our meeting that I sat quietly shaking my head. Everything about him was both honest and a contradiction. The last time I saw this guy he was in a three-piece suit talking about third world countries to a bunch of stiff. And now this. Everything was normal to him, he took everything in stride.

*WC: I have no problem flirting, they would be disappointed if I didn't. There's a Cary Grant movie that explains things fairly*

*Continued on page three*

Walker Caine *continued from page two*

*well, he said "When I meet an attractive young woman I just tell myself she couldn't possibly be interested in me" (using a Cary Grant impression). Cary was a true gentleman, I try to be like that. On the other hand, Tony Curtis and Dean Martin were my kind of guys too.*

*RM: That's commendable.*

*WC: I don't know about that, but there are too few of us around. Someone has to do it.*

Walker turned out to be modest and obviously very reluctant to talk about himself, particularly when it didn't pertain to his current character, but I'd hear him say "that's why I'm here" under his breath and then break into a story to answer whatever question I may have asked. I think the only direct answer I ever got was "No".

But when I asked him what it was like being a musician, he got an impish grin and said "I'm not a musician, I'm a rock star!" and started laughing.

We sat there for two hours talking. I didn't want to like him, but I couldn't help it. Walker Caine turned out to be the most unpretentious and down-to-earth person I think I've ever met. He didn't play a part or seem think he was anything other than what he was.

This was a rare person, the genuine article. But perhaps most importantly to me, he came across as his own man with his own version of success.

This is a man that rides a motorcycle thousands of miles around the country every year doing volunteer work and playing music at clubs in order to pay for it. He's had cancer and he has a

back problem that makes him legally disabled; but none of that ever played into his conversation.

In fact, if anything, most of the time he acts like a kid; right down to a straw sword fight with a little boy at the table next to us.

He talked about his friends that recorded with him and about their projects and families with a loyalty and excitement that made you want to meet them. Stories of his travels - things he's seen and people he's met bounced in and out of the conversation.

He would probably make a good book, but he kept stories vague and to the point often suggesting that it was because he didn't want to bore me.

He talked motorcycles and sponsors; he talked about music and the problems they've had with the industry and why he hasn't played Arizona since 1978.

He boasted of his children and how his wife puts up with it all, but would drift off whenever I would ask him about the past, in a way that said there were too many memories to sort through. Nevertheless, I was still curious how he got here, and why now. But he kept evading that.

He modestly and humorously spoke of his charity work but then got excited about an idea he has for creating public service announcements to post on YouTube and anywhere else, just because he believes in it.

There was a quick wit and sense of humor which came out constantly and ran circles around me. Several times I found myself stopping to think about what

he had just said.

Finally he stopped abruptly and looked around just as he did when he arrived and I knew our time was up. We shook hands and said our goodbyes and I walked away from Walker even more impressed than I was when we met.

I keep that letter on my bulletin board because the question was never answered. I don't know who Walker Caine is, I feel I barely scratched the surface.

But I now find myself visiting his website now & then to listen to his music and remember the afternoon that I met an interesting man.

He's not someone you easily forget.

---

walkercaine.com